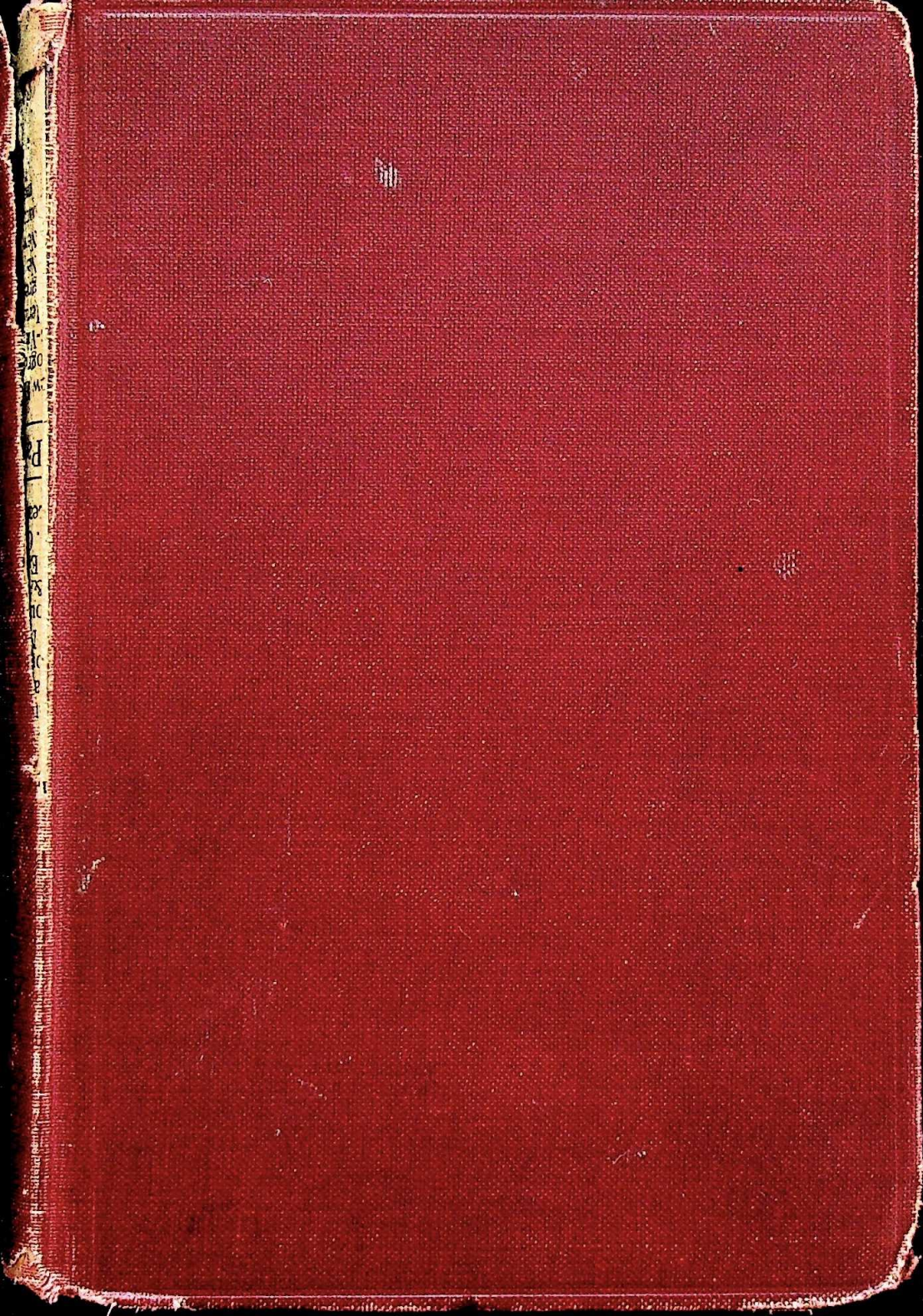




Podlas Tomasz

SHORT MEDITATIONS

FOR

EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

BY THE
ABBÉ LASAUSSE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

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DEDICATION.

To St. Francis of Sales, whose sweet and gentle spirit so pervades these pages, this book is dedicated. Its contents may be compared to a garden of flowers wherein we may gather each morning a bouquet of holy thoughts with which to refresh our souls, by dwelling upon them from time to time during the day.

May it increase our love for God by implanting in our hearts a desire to practise the virtues of which these saints have given us so shining examples! The sweetness of St. Francis; the humility of St. Vincent; the burning love for God which filled the heart of St. Teresa, St. Magdalene of Pazzi, St. Bernard, and many others; the boundless confidence in God, and entire abandonment into His hands, in all things temporal as well as spiritual, which characterized St. Charles Borromeo, are all noble examples of that perfection to which a Christian soul may attain when aided by divine grace.

THE TRANSLATOR.

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS OF SALES,
January 29, 1890.

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A HAPPY YEAR.

JANUARY.

Love of Jesus Christ

"If any man love not Our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."—1 COR. xvi. 22.

FIRST DAY.

What seek you that you will not find in Jesus Christ? If you are sick, He is your physician. In affliction He is your comfort, in exile your hope. If you are attacked, He is your defender. In darkness He is your light. You are an orphan, He is your father. He is your spouse, your friend, your brother: Our Lord Jesus Christ is all you can and should desire.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Francis of Assisi dwelt for entire hours upon these words: "My God and my all."

Can we not say with St. Augustin, "O my God, he that knows Thee not, though he should know all besides, is unfortunate; but he that knows Thee, though ignorant of all else, and that loves Thee, is happy! Grant that I may know and love Thee"?

A holy religious used these words to her companions, to excite them to the love of Jesus Christ: "We have been created to love God, and we love Him not. What! we do not love a God Who from eternity has not ceased to love us? We do not love for Himself a God infinitely perfect, Who has loved us with a love so disinterested? We do not

love with a tender love a God Who has loved us with the love of a father? We do not love with a generous love a God Whose love for us has caused Him to deliver Himself to ignominy, sorrows, and death? We do not love with all the love of which we are capable a God Who has loved us with so prodigious an excess of love?"

Prayer.

Pardon, O my Saviour, all the sins which are committed every day and everywhere. I desire only Thy love. I sigh only for Thee. Grant that we may love Thee in the manner most agreeable to Thee.

SECOND DAY.

' The knowledge of Jesus Christ, that is, of His person, of His perfections, of His love, of His benefits, is the source of eternal life.—*St. Cyril.*

St. Teresa has said: "Since I have had the happiness to know Jesus Christ, of beholding faint glimpses of that ravishing beauty, nothing created can find a place in my heart, all things earthly are distasteful to me."

What wonders did not the love of Jesus Christ operate in the heart of St. Paul! One might say his heart resembled that of Jesus Christ. In St. Ignatius the Martyr! He was so penetrated with His love that, after his death, the name of Jesus was found engraven in letters of gold upon his breast. In St. Jerome! He would finish his days beside the crib of Our Saviour. In St. Augustin! His heart was entirely consecrated to Jesus Christ. In St. Francis of Assisi! Every hour he dwelt upon the wounds of Our Saviour. In St. Antony of Padua! who was continually occupied with the holy infancy. In St. Bernard! With what effusion of heart he spoke of Jesus Christ! In St. Charles Borromeo! who never ceased to meditate upon the Passion. In St. Francis of Sales, St.

Ignatius of Loyola, St. Philip Neri ! all so celebrated for their ardent love of Jesus Christ.

Prayer.

I am afflicted, O amiable Jesus, because Thou art so little loved and so often offended. Master of hearts ! take possession of our hearts. Grant that I may always think of Thee, desire only to please Thee ; that in all things I may seek only Thy glory, and endeavor always to love Thee and cause others to love Thee.

THIRD DAY.

We must seek wisdom only in Jesus Christ.—*St. Thomas.*

St. Paulinus, writing to Aper, a man of learning who had renounced the profane sciences to consecrate himself to God in the religious life, said : “ Let orators exercise themselves to speak well, philosophers cultivate the sciences, the rich take care of their treasures ; our kingdom is Jesus Christ.” The same saint wrote to another who, in striving to acquire human knowledge, had neglected his salvation : “ You find time to read the poets and orators, to study philosophy, and you find no time to be a Christian ! Be a philosopher of God, study Jesus Christ in His school.”

A zealous Christian silenced some persons who, through their own passions and the reading of bad books, had become unbelievers, by saying to them : “ If Jesus Christ be not God, how comes it that all the prophecies regarding the Messiah are so perfectly verified in Him ? How could He invent, preach, and spread a doctrine so sublime, which teaches man so perfectly to know God, his duties, his obligations, his last end ? How is it that in presence of Jews and Pagans He performed such wonderful miracles ? that His disciples also, in His name, performed miracles most astounding ? How is it that in so short a time the world embraced Christianity, and all the efforts of impiety have been

unable to overthrow it? Men who are most virtuous, most happy, are they not true Christians, who live according to the Gospel, and who obey the Catholic Church, which is the only Church of Jesus Christ?"

Prayer.

O Jesus, my Saviour and my God, if Thou art not God, God Himself has deceived us. O Jesus, have pity on those who have lost the precious gift of faith; enlighten those who are in darkness. I believe in Thee, I love Thee.

FOURTH DAY.

If wisdom is God, the true philosopher is he who loves God.—
St. Augustin.

Every man must study philosophy, said St. Justin; that is, he must apply himself to know and to love Jesus Christ, Who is true wisdom.

St. Laurence Justinian relates that, at the age of nineteen, Wisdom appeared to him under the form of a virgin full of majesty, and said: "Why seek contentment in creatures? I alone possess what you seek; you will find it in me if you take me for your spouse." He gave himself to Wisdom, and never ceased to love her; he loved her always with ardent and tender love. In like manner we should give ourselves to Jesus Christ.

The more you love God the more you will possess true wisdom. Why are persons living in the same state of life, performing the same exterior actions, the same exercises of piety, different in the sight of God? It is because the interior is different; it is because their love of God is not the same, says St. Augustin.

Prayer.

I ask pardon, O my amiable Saviour, because I have so often pierced Thy heart by sin. Be merciful; give me

wisdom, that it may enlighten my mind and wound my heart with love.

FIFTH DAY.

The plenitude of the divinity lives really in Jesus Christ. He is God, He is your God. O man, why do you wander elsewhere, seeking outside of Him any good either for soul or body? Love Him Who is Beauty itself; love a good in Whom is all good; desire Him Who is all good, and all your desires will be granted.—*St. Anselm.*

St. Augustin, struck with these perfections, cried out: "Too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty ever ancient, O Beauty ever new!" Let us love this sovereign Beauty; we shall be beautiful in loving Him Who is always beautiful. Beauty increases in proportion as love grows, because love is the beauty of the soul.

St. Gertrude, in her *Exercises of Divine Love*, invites pious souls to excite in their hearts lively emotions of love three times during the day, morning, noon, and evening, to make amends for not having loved Our Lord with all their hearts. She calls Jesus Christ her sovereign, her only good, the faith of her heart. She asks Him, for the love of His love, to grant her grace to look upon all that she is as belonging to Him.

The same saint consecrated one day in each week to divine love; she called this day *the day of love*. On that day she asked seven times of God that He would be her Master in teaching her the art of loving.

Prayer.

My God, grant that Thy grace may abound where iniquity has abounded. Grant that Thy love may reign in hearts where the love of the world has reigned. I love Thee, I will love all things in Thee and for Thee.

SIXTH DAY.

If I belong entirely to God because He has created me, what remains for me to give Him for having redeemed me in so loving a manner? Reflect, Christian. You have been enriched, by an act

of the love of Jesus Christ, with all that is necessary for your salvation. God has poured upon you all heavenly blessings through the merits of Our Saviour, and in consideration of the love He has had for you.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Ambrose was animated with gratitude to God when reflecting upon the gratitude manifested by certain domestic animals. Who would not blush with shame, said he, to reflect upon our ingratitude, when we see that even the beasts are not ungrateful? Does the dog forget the master who feeds him? Let us cease to be ingrates.

Let us be grateful to Jesus Christ, Who has redeemed us from the tyranny of the demon and merited for us by His sufferings life eternal. St. Gertrude, on awakening in the morning, seemed to hear the Beloved of her heart saying, "Awake! How long wilt thou give thyself to sleep? The King of heaven is your spouse; He burns with ardent love for thee; He has washed thee in His blood, He has delivered Himself to death for thee, because He loves thee. Wilt thou hesitate to return love for love? Could He buy thy love at a higher price? He has loved thee more than Himself, since He has not spared Himself for thee. Love demands love." A priest of God, full of zeal, often said to those whom he directed: "Your body belongs to Him Who nourishes your soul with His own body; your blood, to Him Who has shed for you His blood; your life, to Him Who has given His life for you."

Prayer.

O my Saviour, I offer Thee amends for all the ingratitude that men offer Thee! Alas! I have been myself a monster of ingratitude. If I cannot give my blood for Thine, I can give love for love.

SEVENTH DAY.

One of the greatest reasons for which Jesus Christ came upon earth and gave Himself to us was that, man knowing to what excess God has loved him, his heart would burn with ardent love for Him Who loved him first with such excessive love.—*St. Augustin.*

St. Francis of Paula, deeply touched in pondering on the infinite love God has shown us, exclaimed: "O God, O charity! O God, O charity! How excessive is the charity Thou hast manifested to us! Grant that Thy love may enkindle love in our hearts, that they may be consumed with love for Thee." Let us be penetrated with these sentiments.

A servant of God, addressing himself to Divine Love, said: "Divine Love, be my *mother*; do for me as a tender mother would for her children. Be my *guide*; conduct me, accompany me wherever I may go. Be my *master*; instruct me in the art of loving God, with a love tender, pure, generous, constant, and penitent. Be my *life*; be the soul of my soul. Let it be Thou that thinketh, speaketh, and acteth in me. Let my heart burn with so ardent a love that it enkindle the fire of Thy divine love in all hearts."

Prayer.

O my God! I ask pardon for the many who live but to gratify their passions. Alas! have I not often taken mine for a guide? Let me live only for Thee and for Thy love.

EIGHTH DAY.

The mystery of the Incarnation is the miracle of miracles. In becoming man, the more the Word has humbled Himself, the more has He shown His divine goodness. In the Incarnation we may say God has become one of us.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Peter of Alcantara, hearing on Christmas-day the words sung in the Gospel, "*In principio erat Verbum*," was inflamed with most ardent love and filled with transports of admiration unbounded.

St. Augustin in his *Confessions* declares that he never ceased to reflect upon the goodness of God in His grand work of the redemption of man. In the heart of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was found engraven these words: "And the Word was made flesh."

Let us not forget, says St. Bernard, that it is for sake of our love that God loves us. Let us not forget how ancient, how disinterested, how tender, how strong, how generous, is the love of Jesus for us. He has not ceased to love us, miserable sinners though we be.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, I am grieved because so few will receive Thee, Who hast come for all, and so many Christians, having received Thee, have again rejected Thee. I too have been guilty of this perfidy. Pardon, my Jesus. Come into my heart; enkindle there the fire of Thy love; never permit it to become extinguished.

NINTH DAY.

A child is born: it is the Son of God, Who has become a child that you may become a perfect man. He has come to deliver you from death; He has come upon earth that you may become an inhabitant of heaven.—*St. Ambrose.*

St. Francis, burning with love for the Infant Jesus, exclaims: "Let us love the Infant of Bethlehem, Who, to win our hearts, has given such proofs of His love. Shall we not love Him? Love for love, love without limit, for the infinite love He has had for us."

Let us desire the love for the Infant Jesus which St. John had, who was sanctified by Jesus whilst both were yet in the womb; the love of the angels who sang songs of gladness to announce His birth; of the shepherds who hastened to Bethlehem to visit Him; of the Magi who came from afar to adore Him, to offer Him their gifts; of holy Simeon, who took Him in his arms and pressed Him to his heart. Let us beseech Mary to present us to her Adorable Son, to permit us to give Him our poor testimonials of love and respect. Let us not cease to say to our dear Saviour, Be my Jesus.

Prayer.

Admirable Jesus ! how can we live and not love Thee ? Mercy, Jesus, mercy ! I beg pardon for myself and all others. The more Thou hast humbled Thyself for me, the more dear Thou art to my heart.

TENTH DAY.

The Master, the Lord, He Who is lord of all, has taken the form of a slave, that he who was a slave might recover his liberty and become a master. What incomprehensible charity, O my God, to have delivered Thy Son to redeem a slave!—*St. Ambrose.*

With a great servant of God, let us say: O my Saviour ! I am Thy servant, Thy slave. May I never be separated from Thee ! I belong to Thee ; save me !

St. Catharine of Genoa after her conversion often said: "No more sin, O my God ! nothing but Thy love. Write in my heart the law of Thy love with the sacred letters of the Holy Ghost."

Prayer.

Oh, how insensible are sinners who become slaves to their passions, to the world, to the demon, instead of serving Thee, O my Jesus, the King of kings ! Grant me grace to say from the bottom of my heart: My Jesus, I love Thee !

ELEVENTH DAY.

The love which God has for man has made Him prodigal, if we may so express it, in giving Himself. Is it not to be prodigal, to give not only all He has, but still more—all He is?—*Abbé Gueric.*

To the mind of St. Augustin, it seemed that the sun, the moon, stars, mountains, rivers, all, in fine, that he saw about him, spoke to him in these words: "Augustin, love God, because He has created all this for thee, that thou

mightst love Him." But if we should love the Son of God for all He has given us, what should we not return Him for having given us Himself? says St. Bernard. He has given Himself to us entirely; all that He is is ours.

"God has made to men two admirable presents: He has given them His Word and His love, which is all that He has, all His treasure. The possession of the Son of God and of the Holy Ghost is our Sovereign Good. Let us renounce as useless all other treasures to possess these; we will then have within ourselves the plenitude, the kingdom of God." These reflections are those of Father Surin.

Prayer.

O excess of folly! to have renounced by sin my Sovereign Good: I beg pardon, O my God, for all my sins. I would wish to make satisfaction for all sins committed. Father Eternal, Who art my Father, I beg only Thy divine Son and the Holy Ghost. They suffice for Thee; can they not also be sufficient for my heart?

TWELFTH DAY.

From the moment of His Incarnation until that of His death, the Son of God may be called a Man of sorrows. The cross upon which He was to suffer was always present to His eyes and engraven upon His heart. Lord, in whatever place I seek Thee, I find Thee ever upon the cross.—*Words of a servant of God.*

While meditating upon the sufferings of Jesus Christ, St. Bernard exclaimed, *Quis fecit?* Who has done this? He seemed to hear this response: *Fecit charitas.* It is charity which has worked this great prodigy. Let us cry with St. Elizabeth of Hungary: "Henceforth my only inheritance is Jesus crucified."

Prayer.

O Jesus crucified! it is sin which has nailed Thee to the cross. He who sins mortally crucifies Thee spiritually

in his heart. Death, a thousand deaths rather than sin. Let sin no more reign in me. Let Jesus and the Holy Ghost dwell with me forever.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

The least suffering, the least humiliation on the part of Jesus Christ would have sufficed for our redemption, on account of the infinite dignity of His person. But what sufficed for our redemption did not suffice for His love.—*St. Chrysostom.*

Jesus willed to suffer to excess to redeem us, while without suffering He might have redeemed us. This reflection it is which has filled so many saints with the love of the cross.

St. Teresa said: "Suffer or die." St. Magdalene of Pazzi: "No, not to die, but to suffer." St. John of the Cross: "To suffer and to be despised for Thee." With St. Bernard let us ask for the love of the cross in these words: "My heart on the cross, and the cross in my heart."

Prayer.

Thou permittest, O my God, that I am at times in tribulation; Thou permittest it for my good. I adore Thy will; give me the strength and patience necessary. I offer Thee all my crosses; accept them from the hands of Jesus Christ, through Whom all things are pleasing when offered to Thee.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

There is nothing more salutary than to meditate each day upon the torments a Man-God has endured for us. The wounds of Jesus Christ pierce the hardest of hearts, they inflame the coldest.—*St. Bonaventure.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi, meditating upon the sufferings of Jesus Christ, crucifix in hand, with ardent love cried out: "O Love! O Love! never will my heart cease to tell Thee that Thou art its dear love." With St. Philip Neri, let us often exclaim: "Jesus my love."

A fervent Christian who knew not how to read astonished persons of piety by speaking to them of the adorable perfections of God, and of the love of Jesus Christ. One of these persons offered to teach him to read, so that he might be enabled to read books of devotion. He thanked him, saying, "Before accepting, I must consult my divine Master, Jesus crucified." He did so. This was the answer he received: "What are the books you would read? What use to read? It is I Who am your book. In thinking of Me, you can always read the great love I have had for you. A God suffering and dying for your love—is not this sufficient to occupy you during life and during eternity?"

Prayer.

O my Saviour, all Thy wounds are so many mouths which tell me how guilty I am, how Thou hast loved me, and how grateful I should be. What shall I do to return Thy love?

FIFTEENTH DAY.

It is by the cross that we have been redeemed and delivered; it is by virtue of the cross that we are sanctified and glorified.

"Oh, if you knew the mystery of the cross!" said St. Andrew in reply to the tyrant who bade him renounce Jesus Christ because He had been crucified like a common malefactor. "The cross is not only the instrument upon which Jesus Christ has suffered, it is a pulpit from which our divine Master gives to His disciples the most salutary lessons," says St. Augustin.

No matter what may be the temptation which assails you, if you meditate religiously upon your crucifix, you will be enlightened, says St. Thomas.

St. Philip Beniti, being at the point of death, asked for his book. The assistants knew not which book he desired. One of his disciples, entering into his thoughts, brought him a crucifix. "This is my book," said the saint, and taking it

in his hands, he kissed lovingly the wounds of Our Saviour, and expired. May this be our book! Let us read therein the great love which Jesus Christ has for us.

Prayer.

O my God, should we not rather consent to be crucified than to sin? Grant that I would be happy to be crucified, if I could thus efface my own sins and those of all who offend Thee, and satisfy Thy justice.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Jesus Christ was willing to suffer as much as He would have deserved to suffer had He been guilty of all the sins which have been committed in the world and of all those which will be committed.
—*St. Bonaventure.*

St. Catharine of Genoa, meditating upon the love of Jesus Christ which nailed Him to the cross to expiate our sins, cried: "O Love! O Love! no more sin, no more sin." Let us unite with her in the same language.

St. Mary Magdalene of Florence continually offered herself as a holocaust to God; she offered to Him all her thoughts, all her words, all her actions, promising Him in future to do nothing but in His divine wounds. Raising her eyes often to heaven, she would exclaim: "Lord, Thou knowest that from my infancy to this moment I have desired ardently to please Thee."

Prayer.

O Jesus my love, I would wish to expire of love for Thee, when I think that in so many places Thou art offended, and how many times I have offended Thee myself. I desire only Thy love.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Calvary is the mountain of Jesus Christ. Love that is not born of passion is weak.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

“Let us consider our divine Saviour extended upon the cross as on an altar of love, where He dies of love for us. Ah! why do we not embrace Him in spirit, and die upon the cross with Him Who would die for love of us?” says the same saint.

St. Marcus and St. Marcellianus, having their hands and feet nailed, said to their tyrant: “We never before tasted such delights, since we are here for the love of Jesus Christ.” Let the cross of Jesus live in our hearts, and the heaviest of crosses will appear light.

St. Francis of Assisi, suffering greatly, said: “My God, I thank Thee for all Thou hast given me to suffer. Grant that I may suffer a hundred times as much, if it be Thy will. It is agreeable to me that Thou spare me not here below; the accomplishment of Thy will is for me a source of abundant consolations.”

Prayer.

Lord, I have sinned. I desire to suffer and to die. I offer my life. Strike, cut, burn this victim, but grant me patience to suffer for Thee.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

He who lives constantly united to God sees with the eyes of his soul Jesus dying on the cross. In the wounds of his Saviour he finds strength to suffer, not only with patience, but with joy.—*St. Bonaventure.*

St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, being condemned to be torn by wild beasts, wrote as follows to the Romans. His letter breathes an ardent desire for sufferings. “Suffer, my children,” said he, “that I be ground by the beasts,

that I may become the wheat of Jesus Christ. I seek nothing but Him Who has died for me. The only object of my love is He Who was crucified for me, and the love I bear Him makes me desire to be crucified for Him."

St. Gertrude said to Jesus Christ: "O my Saviour, Who hast loved me and hast suffered for me, I offer for Thy glory all that I have suffered, all that I suffer, and all that I shall suffer. Look upon the love which animates me; grant that it may be a pleasure to suffer because Thou hast willed that I should suffer, Thou Whom I love more than I love myself."

Prayer.

O my Saviour, imprint deeply in my memory, my heart, and soul, Thy holy and sorrowful Passion. Grant that I may never forget what Thou hast suffered. In Thy wounds may I continually read the evil of sin and the greatness of Thy love. Thus in contemplating Thy sorrows, my heart may be penetrated with grief and with love for Thee.

NINETEENTH DAY.

There is nothing that produces in the soul so universal a sanctification as meditating upon the Passion of Jesus Christ.—*St. Bonaventure.*

Father Balthazar Alvarez often repeated to those whom he directed: "Do not persuade yourselves that you have made any progress in virtue until you have fixed in your heart Jesus crucified."

It was through studying Jesus crucified that St. Francis became filled with so ardent love as to merit the title of Seraphic. So abundantly did he weep on meditating on the Passion of Our Saviour that he nearly lost the sight of his eyes. Shall we forget Jesus crucified?

A servant of God, fixing his eyes on his crucifix, said: "To preserve yourself from sin, to animate your patience, to excite your love for Jesus Christ, behold your God upon the cross. Will you dare to sin? Behold your God upon the

cross. Will you complain in your sufferings? Behold your God upon the cross. Is He not worthy of all love?"

Prayer.

Adorable Jesus, Thou hast made Thyself a Man of sorrows for our sins. I will refuse no cross that Thou sendest. I desire no recompense, only patience to support them. It is enough for me to accomplish Thy will.

TWENTIETH DAY.

One tear that is shed at the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus Christ is of more value than a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and a year of fasting on bread and water.—*St. Augustin.*

St. Francis of Assisi, being found weeping, was asked the reason of his tears. He replied: "I weep at the affronts and sorrows of my Saviour; and my pain is increased to see the ingratitude of men who do not love Him, do not even think of Him." Whenever he heard a lamb bleating, it recalled to his mind the Lamb without spot Who died on the cross for the sins of the world. He never ceased to exhort his brethren to have continually in mind the Passion of Jesus Christ. Let us never be ungrateful to a God Who has loved us so excessively.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, by Thy sorrowful Passion have mercy on me, and on all. Grant that I may die rather than renew it by my sins.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Everything in the Passion of Jesus Christ shows how He has loved us—the cross to which He was nailed, the sorrows which He endured, the death which He suffered.—*St. Thomas of Villanova.*

Jesus Christ crucified is our model. His wounds preach to us of the affections which should animate us, what we should be and what we should do.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Thomas Aquinas, during a visit which he made to

St. Bonaventure, asked the latter from what books he had drawn the erudition, the unction which made his writings so admirable. Showing him a crucifix, he replied: "This is my book; it is the source of all I have written. It is this which has taught me the little that I know." Let us press the crucifix to our lips, begging our divine Saviour to instruct us, to give us His love. Let us beseech Him to grant to sinners the grace of conversion, and let us make amends for the sins we have committed.

St. Gertrude meditated with love upon her crucifix. At the sight of her divine Saviour on the cross, she begged for the love of suffering, and asked that she might suffer still more and more with gratitude and love. "I offer to Thee, divine Saviour," said she, "all that it may please Thee to make me suffer, either in body or mind. I desire to imitate Thee, O my Jesus, Who hast loved me even to die for me. Let this body, so rebellious a slave, be chastised. Let my will, which has so often opposed Thine, be unceasingly mortified. I will no longer follow its desires. I place it in Thy hands; dispose of it as Thou wilt." St. Augustin said: "Each time that I am tempted I have recourse to the wounds of Jesus Christ. I take refuge in the bowels of mercy of my Saviour. Jesus Christ died for me: this thought is sweet consolation in my greatest pains. All my hope is in the death of Jesus Christ. His death is my merit, my refuge, my salvation, my life, my resurrection. I wish to live, to die in the arms of my Saviour."

Prayer.

O Jesus, O the God of my heart, by the five wounds which Thou hast received for us on the tree of the cross, have pity on those whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy precious blood. I will no more by my sins renew Thy Passion, crucify Thee again, nor trample under foot Thy adorable blood.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

The cross of Jesus Christ possesses a marvellous virtue. The recollection of it alone will put to flight legions of our invisible enemies, will sustain us in our combat with them, and preserve us from the temptations which surround us.—*St. Augustin.*

In our temptations let us imitate the blessed Cæsar de Buz, who defended himself with the cross alone against all the wicked suggestions of the demon. Taking this precious shield in his hands, he cried: "Fly, enemies of my salvation and of my God; fly, demons. Behold the cross of the Saviour! It is this instrument which has broken the gates of hell. O my Saviour, by the merits of Thy cross deliver me from my enemies."

Let us enter into the dispositions of a great servant of God, who exclaimed: "My God, have pity on me through the merits of Jesus Christ. I will live only in union with Him. I unite my senses with His senses, my mind with His mind, my heart with His heart, my sentiments with His. I would wish to have the same contrition for my sins which He had for them, and I desire that these be the affections of all who have hearts capable of loving."

Prayer.

Jesus crucified, give me a love of Thy cross, and convert those who are its enemies.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

The four extremities of the cross are ornamented with four precious pearls. Humility is placed at the foot, obedience occupies the right, patience the left; charity, the first and queen of virtues, burns in letters of gold at the head. These four virtues shine in a most striking manner in the Passion of Jesus Christ. They are the four principal fruits which we must gather from meditating on Jesus crucified.—*St. Bernard.*

A person who had formed a resolution to serve God begged Father Lefevre, one of the first companions of

St. Ignatius, to point out to her some practices of piety. He recommended her to prostrate herself several times during the day before her crucifix, and say to Jesus Christ: "O my divine Master, Who art my model, Thou hast humiliated Thyself to the lowest abasement, and I am proud! Thou hast been obedient even unto death, and I seek in all things my own will! Thou hast been a Man of sorrows, and I will suffer nothing! Thou hast loved me even to give Thy life for me, and I love Thee so little! I have offended Thee so often!" She was faithful to this practice, and in a short time made great progress in virtue.

Prayer.

O my God, fill me with Thy spirit, the spirit of religion, of love; Thy spirit of sweetness, of zeal; Thy spirit of detachment and of mortification. Give me Thy sentiments. May all hearts be filled with Thy love!

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Contemplate Me hanging on the cross. Behold the state of My body. Enter within; open and penetrate My heart. What do you find? What do you read? Love, nothing but love. (The blessed Angela de Foligno thought she heard Jesus Christ addressing to her these words.)

Let us have a great devotion to the crucifix. Let us often fix our eyes upon the image of Christ crucified. Let us converse with this Man of sorrows, listen to Him, consult Him; love our crucifix, kiss it with much devotion. St. Ludowine, at the end of her life, made use of her eyes only to contemplate the crucifix. This practice filled her heart with the most ardent love.

St. Elizabeth, daughter of the king of Hungary, contemplating long her crucifix, was covered with confusion on beholding herself dressed in the livery of the world and its vanity. Prostrating herself on the ground, she cried: "Jesus crucified will be my portion forever—poverty for

poverty, humiliation for humiliation, cross for cross." During the rest of her life she faithfully kept her promise.

Prayer.

O my adorable Saviour, permit me to solace Thy wounds; replenish me with Thy love. I recommend myself and all others to Thee.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Let us go, my brethren, let us enter into the amiable Heart of Jesus, never more to leave it. Let us excite ourselves to great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is so abundant a source of love and mercy.—*Jean Lansperg, Carthusian.*

The holy bishop of Geneva never spoke of the Sacred Heart of Jesus but with the greatest transports of love. Following his example, let us offer to God the Father the Heart of His divine Son. All that we ask of God, let us ask it through the Heart of Jesus. Let this Sacred Heart be the temple in which we shall never cease to worship; let it be the altar upon which we offer Him our sacrifices, and the victim also.

Let us imitate another holy religious, who begged Jesus Christ that the tribunal before which she would be judged might be His Sacred Heart, in order that it might be a favorable one. St. Matilda, penetrated with the love of Jesus Christ while in prayer, in imagination kissed the sacred wound in His Heart. In this pious exercise she found ineffable sweetness. She seemed to hear the voice of her Beloved, Who said: "My daughter, I desire thee to place in Me alone all the delights of thy soul." She cried: "Yes, my Love, yes, my Love." "Let My love," continued Jesus Christ, "be that of a mother to thee; let it be My love that awakens thee, that clothes thee in the morning, that animates thee, that prays, that speaks, that acts in thee, that conducts thee wherever thou goest." From awakening in the morning until resting at night, she lived only in and for the love of His divine Heart.

Prayer.

I will go with confidence to Thy Sacred Heart, O my Jesus! I will enter, I will bury myself there. I will say with love, "Holy, holy, holy. Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, glory be to the Holy Ghost." I will never cease to bless, to praise Thy infinite perfections. Thou art the sovereign good, Thou art the source of all good, Thou art a good that is eternal, infinite, the only principle of all perfection, of all glory, and of all happiness. O my Saviour, inspire all Christians with a great devotion to Thy Sacred Heart.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

There is a feast where we receive Jesus Christ and renew the remembrance of His Passion. Disciples of Jesus Christ, love Jesus Christ your Master; adore with more devotion, receive with more fervor the Saviour of the world, Who, though life itself, suffered and died for you.

When you are about to unite yourself to Jesus Christ in holy Communion, enter into the sentiments of a worthy priest of Jesus Christ who, before ascending the altar, made this reflection: "I am going to renew the Passion of Our Saviour; will it be for my salvation? Alas! I will perhaps perform the office of one of His executioners, I will perhaps crucify Him within me, I will perhaps render myself guilty of the body of the Lord. O my Saviour, do not permit it."

St. Matilda prayed that Our Lord would teach her to prepare for Communion. She begged Him to write His adorable name in her heart in such a manner that it might never be effaced from her memory. She desired to receive Him with all the love of which the human heart is capable; she besought Him to look upon this desire and fill her with all graces as if indeed she really had received Him in the manner she so ardently desired.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, I am not worthy to approach Thee, but I love Thee—would that it were without limit! I approach Thee to obey Thee, and to glorify Thee, to fortify myself and to be transformed into Thee. If I have had the misfortune to make unworthy Communion, pardon me. I would make atonement for all unworthy Communion which have been made since the institution of this sacrament of love.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

A very great crime in Christians, a crime which brings upon them frightful chastisements, is to receive unworthily Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the sacrament of His love. The profaners of this adorable sacrament will drink during eternity the chalice of divine vengeance.—*St. John Damascene.*

A person at the point of death, who had the unhappiness of having made sacrilegious Communion, thought he saw the demon approaching him, and heard these words: "Because you have made unworthy Communion you will receive to-day Communion from my hands." The unfortunate cried aloud, in his despair: "The vengeance of God is upon me, the vengeance of God is upon me!" He died pronouncing these words. Let us not forget what the deacon formerly said before giving Communion: "Holy things are for the holy. Let him who is not holy, that is, free from sin and well prepared, take care how he approach the holy table, to receive the Holy of holies."

Prayer.

O my God, have I not reason to fear lest I may have made unworthy Communion, as I so often fall again into my sins so soon after receiving Thy adorable body? I would that I could efface all sacrileges with tears of blood. Have pity on us according to Thy great mercy.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

In the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus Christ, says the Council of Trent, has lavished upon men all the riches of His love. This sacrament is the sacrament of charity. According to St. Thomas it is the pledge of the sovereign charity of Jesus Christ. It is called by St. Bernard the love of loves.

St. Magdalene of Pazzi said that a person who communicated often might well say: "All is consummated. God, in giving Himself to me in holy Communion, could give me nothing more precious than what He has given."

When St. Philip Neri was dying, on beholding the priest with the holy Viaticum, he exclaimed: "This is my love, my love; give me my love!" Let us enter into these sentiments when we approach the table of the Lord.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, O my Love, Thou givest Thyself to me, and Thou but askest my heart in return. What is this heart of mine of which Thou art so jealous? O my God, Who art so perfect, Thou sufficest for Thyself. How blind will I be if I ever love anything but Thee! Grant, O my God, that my heart may rest in Thee alone, for Whom it is created. I will do all in my power to gain hearts to Thee, my Lord.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

By Communion we are united to Him Whom the blessed spirits dare not behold, so penetrated are they with holy reverence. We become one body, one flesh with Him. Where is the shepherd who nourishes his flock with his own blood? We see many mothers who confide their children to nurses. It is not thus Jesus Christ does in our regard; He nourishes us with His own blood.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

"O my love!" exclaimed St. Augustin. "Jesus Christ has said, 'Eat My body,' that there might be a most intimate union between Him and me. Is not this the folly of love?"

January.

St. Magdalene of Pazzi asked a novice what were the thoughts which occupied her in holy Communion. She replied: "I thought of the love of Jesus." "That is well," said the saint, "but it is not sufficient to think of that for a short time only; we must think constantly of it."

Prayer.

My God, I would that, in order to please Thee, I possessed all the humility, obedience, faith, love, religion, hope, all the virtues of all the saints, that Thou mightst be more and more glorified.

THIRTIETH DAY.

If Jesus Christ is our daily bread, why do you receive Him so seldom? Live in such a manner that you may be worthy to receive this celestial bread each day.—*St. Ambrose.*

"Nothing so fills our hearts with love for the Sovereign Good as holy Communion," said the venerable Father Olimpe. Another saint has said that to procure the happiness of uniting herself with Jesus Christ in holy Communion she would not hesitate to pass through flames of fire to obtain it, if necessary.

On the days that St. Catharine of Siena did not receive holy Communion she was sick; it seemed as if she could not live any longer. When she received Our Lord she was strong again. Let us prepare ourselves for Communion by renouncing all irregular affections, by many spiritual Communion, and by the practice of different virtues.

Prayer.

O my God, I will approach Thee often. Grant that it be with a pure heart, profound humility, and great joy born of love. Grant that these be the dispositions of all hearts.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

The time that you pass with devotion at the foot of the altar before Jesus Christ is the time wherein you will obtain most graces, and which will be your greatest consolation at the hour of death and during eternity. There is no place where Jesus Christ hears our prayers more promptly.—*Bl. Henry Suzo.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi made each day thirty visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

St. Louis of Gonzaga passed all his time in the church when obedience did not call him elsewhere. Before leaving the church he would say lovingly: "Retire from me, O Lord; retire from me."

It was always at the feet of Our Lord that the apostle of the Indies rested from his fatigues. Having passed the day in laboring for the salvation of souls, he spent part of the night before the Blessed Sacrament.

St. Francis Regis spent his time in like manner. When he found the church closed, he knelt at the door, no matter how severe the cold.

St. Francis of Assisi undertook nothing without first going to the church to consult Jesus Christ.

The Countess Féria was called the spouse of the Blessed Sacrament, because she spent all the time that the duties of her position permitted in adoration in the church. She was asked what she did so long in the church. She replied: "What does a courtier do before his king? one who is sick before a physician? the poor before the rich? What does he who is famished by hunger do when placed at a table where there are most exquisite viands? Thus do I in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament."

Prayer.

O my Saviour, I love Thee but little, since it is not my delight to be at the foot of Thy altars. Alas! how many times have I not offended Thee even in Thy temple! In

thinking of Thy love for me, of what Thou hast done for me, I ought to die from excess of love for Thee. O my God, was it not carrying Thy love to excess to become one of us by Thy incarnation, to be our companion, to die on the cross to expiate our sins, and to be our recompense in heaven? And still more, Thou givest Thyself to us as a nourishment! Victim of salvation, Who hast opened the gates of heaven, behold the number and the malice of the enemies who surround us for our destruction; help and strengthen us!

FEBRUARY.

Humility.

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—ST. LUKE xiv. 11.

FIRST DAY.

Humility is the foundation of every virtue. There is no better means to obtain heavenly gifts than humility.—*St. Augustin.*

The virtue the practice of which St. Vincent of Paul most recommends is humility.

It is the virtue which St. Louis of Gonzaga desired with most ardor; every day he prayed to the saints and angels to obtain by their intercession the grace to follow in this royal road in which they had walked before him.

A holy religious was accustomed to say: "I would willingly give both eyes to acquire the virtue of humility."

Prayer.

My God, give me humility; grant that I may know my nothingness, my miseries, my weakness. Grant that this knowledge may keep me humble in Thy sight; and may I never cease to implore the assistance of Thy grace!

SECOND DAY.

Humility is the mother of many virtues. It is this virtue that gives birth to obedience, patience, the fear of God, modesty, and peace.—*St. Thomas of Villanova.*

So great an affection did St. Jane Frances de Chantal have for humility that she watched continually over her-

self lest some occasion should be lost for practising this virtue. Writing to St. Francis de Sales, she said: "My dear Father, I beseech you, for the honor of God, help me to humble myself."

Prayer.

My adorable Saviour, when I reflect to what an excess Thou hast humbled Thyself for me, I am confused at the little love I have for humiliations. I will let no occasion pass that can serve to humble me, that I may imitate and please Thee.

THIRD DAY.

He who is not profoundly humble can never arrive at a sublime degree of prayer.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Bridget heard these words from Our Lord: that a soul which seeks the things of heaven must lower itself and walk in paths of humiliation. St. Clare of Montefalco during fifteen days was deprived of the heavenly favors with which Our Lord was accustomed to visit her, because she had not resisted sentiments of self-love after having done a good action, although she had not failed to weep and punish herself for her fault.

Prayer.

My God, I desire most ardently to be humble, and I will not cease to beg it of Thee, that Thou mayest look upon me with mercy, and give me grace to please Thee here and love Thee eternally in heaven.

FOURTH DAY.

Humility is necessary, not only to acquire virtues, but to be saved. Jesus Christ has said that the gates of heaven are so narrow that only the little, that is the humble, can enter therein.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Philip Neri was accustomed to say: "The wound in the side of Jesus Christ is large; but unless He has pity on me I will make it still larger." Every morning he ad-

dressed to God this prayer: "Lord, watch over me this day. If Thou dost not guard me I will betray Thee, and I will fall into grievous sins." Each time that he left his house, he said to God: "Take care of me, otherwise I depart a Christian and shall return a Jew." Is it not true, self-evident, that we are nothing, can do nothing? Can we lose sight of our miseries, of our sins? He who has a wound on his body which gives him pain does not reflect whether it is there, for he sees and feels it."

Prayer.

Lord, Who hatest the proud and wilt humble them, give me humility. Without humility I shall offend Thee unceasingly; without humility I shall be lost.

FIFTH DAY.

The most powerful weapon to vanquish the demon is humility.—
St. Francis of Paula.

St. Teresa could not conceive why preachers spoke so frequently of the necessity of humility. Is it not evident, said she, that in nothing can we glorify ourselves, since all the good we have comes from God? How can we, who are subject to so many miseries, and who have committed so many sins, be proud? We have nothing in us of which we can be vain.

Father Alvarez compared his life to a bunch of grapes in which almost every grape was spoiled. Among so many actions, said he, there is scarcely any without a defect. "And woe to me," added he, "if God examines them too closely!"

St. Dominic was accustomed to kneel at the gates of the city where he was about to preach, and beg of God not to afflict the people with any chastisements on account of his sins.

St. Philip Neri advised those whom he directed to say,

when they had fallen into a fault: "If I had been humble I should not have fallen."

Prayer.

Lord, I am but a sinner. How many sins have I not committed! I sin unceasingly. Have pity on me; grant me mercy. Woe to me if Thou treatest me as I have merited!

SIXTH DAY.

The humble, those who have a lowly opinion of themselves and love to be despised by others, please God the most. He makes it His delight to be with them, to pour upon them the treasures of His grace, to reveal to them His secrets, and to attract them sweetly to Himself.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

Thais, being converted, never forgot her past disorderly life. Penetrated with confusion at her sins, she never dared to mention the holy name of God. Thus she expressed herself in addressing Him: "Thou Who hast created me, have mercy on me." By such sentiments of humility she became so pleasing to God that she obtained an eminent degree of sanctity. A servant of God much esteemed by St. Ignatius said: "He who thinks he is of no value is worth much; and he who thinks he is of much worth is worth nothing."

Prayer.

Lord, I have nothing, I deserve nothing, I am less than nothing, since I am a sinner. I have recourse to Thee. The more wretched a poor man is, the greater is his hope that the rich, to whom he addresses himself, will take pity on him. I beseech Thee, have mercy on me, according to the greatness of my miseries.

SEVENTH DAY.

One day during which we humble ourselves profoundly on account of our sins and miseries brings to us more graces than many days employed in prayer.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Francis of Assisi regarded himself as the greatest sinner in the universe, and worthy of hell. He said that he did not deserve that God would deign to cast one look upon him. "I know what I will do to appease Our Lord," said St. Bonaventure. "I will look upon myself as the vilest on earth; I will be to my eyes an object of horror; and when I see myself humbled, despised, outraged, covered with opprobrium, I will rejoice, I will bless the Lord."

St. Vincent de Paul humbled himself continually before God, and said: "How many sins will I not commit if Thou regulate not my words and actions!"

Prayer.

My God, I am worthy of Thy anger, of Thy maledictions, and of Thy vengeance, on account of my sins and the abuse of Thy grace. Have pity on this miserable sinner, who dares not raise his eyes to Thee and is penetrated with sorrow.

EIGHTH DAY.

Be abject in your own eyes, and esteem yourself happy to be regarded so by others. Do not exalt yourself on account of the gifts of God. Then you will be perfectly humble.—*St. Bonaventure.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi persuaded herself that she was the most miserable of creatures, that there was nothing on earth more abominable than herself. Her great humility made her exaggerate her least faults, so that others also might have the same opinion of her. It was a great torment to so humble a soul to hear herself praised, to see herself esteemed. She was most unhappy that she was unable to hide the favors which Our Lord granted her as a sign of His love and of her predilection.

Another saint attributed to her sins all those committed by others. She said she resembled the demon on account of her pride and ingratitude.

Prayer.

Lord, have compassion on the greatest of sinners, on beholding that I detest my sins because they offend Thee Who art my Father, my God.

NINTH DAY.

Humility, which Jesus Christ has so recommended by word and example, should have three conditions. It should convince us that we deserve to be blamed by men. It should make us rejoice when others see our faults and despise us. If God performs any good in us or through us, it should make us attribute it to the mercy of God and the merit of others.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Vincent de Paul said of himself that he was an old sinner, unworthy to live, and was much in need of the mercy of God on account of the enormity of his sins. Prostrating himself one day before the priests of his congregation, they were astonished to hear him thus address them: "If you knew my miseries, you would drive me from the congregation of which I have charge, which I dishonor, and to which I do harm." He often spoke of the lowliness of his birth. One day a nephew called to see him, who was dressed in the costume of a poor peasant. The saint afterwards accused himself to his priests of the mortification he felt in presenting his relative to them and to some other gentlemen who were present on that occasion. Having occasion to speak frequently of his slavery at Tunis, he never mentioned that he was the cause of bringing back to the Church his master, who was a renegade, lest it might awaken vain thoughts in him. If necessity or charity obliged him to speak of any good that he did, it was always to the zeal of others he attributed his success.

Prayer.

I acknowledge, O my God, that I merit all kinds of reproaches, humiliations, and contempt. I have done only evil. I am ready to submit to whatever punishment Thou mayst inflict. But remember Thou art my Father. Spare me in the world to come.

TENTH DAY.

We should always consider others as our superiors, and even submit ourselves to those who are our inferiors, by showing a wish to serve them. May God well establish us in this excellent practice !
—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

There was no one St. Vincent de Paul did not esteem. In his eyes every one was better than himself, more prudent, more perfect, better fitted to perform any duty. From this, he had no difficulty in preferring the opinions of others to his own. This thought that all others were better than himself it was that made him constantly place himself at the feet of all.

Imagine that you hear Jesus Christ address you in these words: "If you wish for a great love of God, keep yourself interiorly at the feet of all creatures. Believe that this is your place."

Prayer.

I have good reason, O my God, to prefer myself to no one. There is no one more guilty than I, more unworthy of Thy mercies. Have pity on a miserable worm of the earth, who has the audacity to rebel against Thee and make use of Thy gifts to offend Thee.

ELEVENTH DAY.

Our Saviour has said that it is necessary for him who would become greater than others to make himself the least. This is a truth all Christians believe. How is it so few conform their lives to it?—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Paula, according to St. Jerome, was so filled with the thought of her own nothingness, on account of her great

humility, that one who was not acquainted with her, and wished to see her on account of the great reputation for sanctity she had acquired, would never suspect it was she from the lowliness of her aspect. Surrounded by a number of pious virgins, there was nothing in her exterior, in her language or manners to distinguish her from them. One would think she was the last among those to whom she was a mother and a model.

"I am not worthy to be looked upon, to be borne with; I am not worthy to live, since I have sinned; I am worthy only to be despised and abused; I am worthy only of hell," said a great servant of God.

Prayer.

Teach me, O my God, to be little in my own eyes, to be the least of all. Deign to make known to me my ingratitude to Thee, and that I may never lose sight of it, but be always deeply penetrated with the sense of it.

TWELFTH DAY.

Do not think you have made any progress in perfection until you regard yourself as the last of all, and desire that all others should be preferred to you, because it belongs to those who are great in the eyes of God to be little in their own.—*St. Teresa.*

A monk said to his abbot that he never lost sight of God. The abbot, who was a saint, replied: "That is a very small thing; it would be a much greater thing if you always placed yourself beneath every one."

It is said of St. Teresa that her thoughts were always occupied in regarding her own faults and in admiring the virtues of others. When she would hear of others doing a good work, she would exclaim: "How happy for them! All are endeavoring to serve God but me."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may never lose sight of my lowliness, my weakness, my inconstancy, the abuse I make of

Thy graces, and of my iniquities. Let this thought fill me with confusion, and bring me often to Thee for mercy.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

To be great before God, by the practice of virtue, and little and vile in our own eyes—this is the humility so agreeable to God, and so rare among men.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Teresa, meditating on the singular favors she received from God, made it an occasion to humble herself profoundly. "They are the supports which prove my weakness," said she. "A house that is not solid has all the more need of stays to support it."

There was no virtue that was not to be found in St. Vincent de Paul, although he studied to hide them all. According to himself, he was so poor in spiritual gifts that he deserved the title of *miserable*, which was the name he chose.

Prayer.

My God, I desire but the title of miserable and of sinner, since there is nothing in me but sin and misery. Alas! in which of my works canst Thou discover anything but faults? I am lost if Thou dost not treat me according to Thy mercy.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

Vain complacency, and the desire that others would speak of us and praise us, is an evil which makes us forget God and spoils our holiest actions. There is no vice more pernicious to those who would make any progress in the spiritual life.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

From his earliest years, St. Thomas Aquinas abhorred praise. He was never heard to speak one word that showed he sought the esteem of creatures. He acknowledged one day to a religious that, with God's grace, he had never been tempted to pride. St. Vincent de Paul had taken the resolution that never without necessity would he speak of anything that might attract esteem. Travelling one day with three priests, he related to them some interesting

events that had happened to him ; but in the middle of the narrative, when they were most entertained, he was seen to strike his breast and heard to say that he was a miserable sinner, full of pride and always speaking of himself. The priests having reached their destination, he threw himself on his knees before them, and begged pardon for the bad example he had given them.

Prayer.

O humble Jesus, my adorable Master, give me indifference for the esteem of men, a horror of their praise, love for humiliations and contempt. Grant that I may love to be unknown, forgotten, covered with disgrace for Thy sake. Never permit me to speak to my advantage, nor be governed by vanity, nor listen to self-love. Give me true humility, a profound humility of heart.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

What does it signify if we are calumniated, despised, outraged by men, if we are innocent before God and agreeable in His eyes? The saints made it their pleasure to be little and abject in the hearts of all.—*St. Teresa.*

Monseigneur Camus, bishop of Belley, complained to St. Francis of Sales of a great injury that had been done him. The Bishop of Geneva said to him: "I admit they have done wrong to treat you thus ; they should respect your character. I find fault with you only in one point." "In what?" asked the bishop of Belley. "It is that you are not as prudent as you ought to be ; it would become you to be silent." The friend of St. Francis of Sales acknowledged his fault.

Prayer.

O my divine Saviour, I consent to be disapproved of, blamed, despised, for Thy love. It matters not whether I please or displease creatures, if I am agreeable in Thy eyes. I desire to live only in Thy heart.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

When you see one who desires honors and flees abjection, and who when meeting persecution or contempt is troubled and complains, be assured that even should he work miracles, he is far from perfection, his virtue is without foundation.—*St. Thomas Aquinas.*

This saint abhorred honors and praise. Clement IV. offered him the Archbishopric of Naples. He not only refused, but obtained the favor from the same Pontiff that he would never offer him any other dignity. It was through pure obedience that he took the degree of Doctor. He rejoiced when in college that one, whose master he might have been, but who had been given to him as a teacher, called him the *dumb ox*, attributing his silence to ignorance and want of talent. One day, while reading publicly during dinner, he was ordered to pronounce a word in a different manner. He repeated the word immediately as he was told, though he was sure it was wrong. "It matters little," said he afterwards to one of his companions, "to make a syllable long or short; but it is of extreme importance to be humble and obedient."

Prayer.

Lord, grant that I may be afflicted and that I may suffer when I receive marks of esteem and respect, when I am praised, or when I am preferred to others. I deserve to be despised, to be hated by all creatures, because I am a great sinner. Alas! I have scarcely done anything but offend Thee all my life.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

The most profound degree of humility is to receive humiliations and abjections with the same complacency that vain persons do the greatest honors.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

St. Dominic dwelt with much more pleasure in the diocese of Carcassonne than in that of Toulouse, where he had converted numbers of heretics. He was asked the

reason. He replied : " In Toulouse they load me with honors ; in Carcassonne I am abhorred, persecuted, insulted."

" It would be much more agreeable to me," said St. Felix, a Capuchin, " to see myself insulted, despised, and covered with disgrace in the streets of Rome than to find myself honored and respected by the people."

Prayer.

My God, do not permit that the praise or esteem of men be for me a hindrance to my salvation. I desire to be honored and loved but by Thee. I wish to please Thee alone.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

He who is truly humble can never persuade himself that any one can do him wrong. What a thought !—that He Who is our Creator bears with so many injuries from His creatures, and we are wounded by a word ! It matters little if we are esteemed or not, whether good or evil is said of us. Honors should be to us a greater affliction than injuries or insult.—*St. Teresa.*

When St. Francis of Sales saw that some were afflicted because he had been calumniated, he said : " Let them alone. It is a cross of words, a breath of air, the remembrance of which should perish with its sound. One must be very delicate to be unable to suffer the bite of a fly. What wrong can they do us by having an evil opinion of us, when we should have the same opinion of ourselves?"

Prayer.

How can any one wrong me, O my God—I who have offended Thee, and who have so often deserved hell ? I am a monster of ingratitude against whom all creatures should arise to avenge the outrages I have committed against Thee.

NINETEENTH DAY.

One who is humble, when he receives humiliations, humbles himself still more; when he is covered with contempt, rejoices that he is despised; when he is given an occupation that is low and abject, acknowledges that it is better than he deserves, and performs it with pleasure; he flees only those places that are distinguished and honorable.—*St. Jane Frances.*

A gentleman on one occasion being very angry with St. Vincent de Paul, in his fury said something rude and insulting. The saint immediately threw himself at his feet, begged his pardon for perhaps giving him occasion to speak in such a manner.

A certain person, who was a leader in one of those errors which excited much discussion in the last century, proposed these false maxims to the same saint for adoption. Finding he could not succeed, he endeavored to injure him, called him ignorant, and said he was astonished the congregation had chosen him for superior-general. "I am still more astonished than you are," replied the saint. "I am incomparably more ignorant than you can imagine."

Prayer.

Make me humble, Lord, that I may rejoice when I am insulted and despised. My Saviour would be covered with shame; why should not His disciples love contempt?

TWENTIETH DAY.

The missionaries should desire to appear of low extraction, to have little talent and virtue. When they are despised, or the congregation receive any humiliations, they should rejoice. Through these means they will learn what progress they have made in humility.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint, who knew so well how useful are humiliations when endured with a spirit of religion, loved them in such a manner that it is related of him by a worthy priest, who knew him well, that he never saw an ambitious man

have more affection for the honors of the world than this humble servant of God had for abjections and contempt. One might say that in this consisted his delight here below.

Prayer.

Grant that I may regard humiliations as my treasure; that I may seek more and more each day to bless God in humiliations, and make acts and practices of this great virtue.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

To support in a Christian manner humiliations and opprobriums is the touchstone of humility and true virtue, because in so doing we are more like to Jesus Christ, the true Model of all solid virtue.
—*St. Francis of Sales.*

It is related of St. Amonius that he had arrived at so high a degree of perfection that he had become as insensible to contempt as though he were a stone. No matter what the insult, he never felt that he had received an injury.

"To suffer injuries without complaining is the door by which our fathers have entered heaven," said an abbot to his monks; this exercise makes easy, even agreeable, that which at first appeared so difficult.

Prayer.

My God, I am well worthy to be despised, since I have despised Thy commandments, since I have outraged Thy perfections. I deserve to be under the feet of all, since I have consented to be the slave of the demon. Grant that this thought may render me eager for humiliations.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

He who is truly humble desires to be despised, turned into derision, persecuted and calumniated. If we would imitate Jesus Christ, it is in this we can most closely follow Him. Would it not be wise in us to rejoice in contempt, to desire that we be looked upon as the last of men, since He Who is Wisdom itself was so regarded?—*St. Teresa.*

A holy religious often asked of her Superior the permis-

sion to confess her faults publicly, and also begged her to impose humiliating penances upon her that she might be despised by all.

St. Catharine of Genoa said: "When I do wrong, it is I alone who do it; I can attribute it neither to the demon nor to any creature, but solely to my evil inclinations, my pride, my sensuality. If Our Lord did not assist me continually with His grace, what would I not become! I am worse than the demon in doing evil." When some little fault was committed through weakness, she would say, "This is a plant of my garden," and humbled herself still more.

Prayer.

My God, I am incapable of any good of myself, I am capable only of doing evil. How can I be proud? Convinced of this truth, ought I not to have a sovereign contempt for myself?

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

If we consider well all there is in us that is human and imperfect, what would we not find to humble us before God, before men, even before our inferiors!—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Teresa relates that Our Lord having enlightened her with a heavenly light, she immediately saw herself full of abominable faults; she appeared to herself like a demon. "How much more would I have seen," said she, "if Our Lord had still further enlightened me!" Confounded at the sight of her miseries, she humbled herself continually. If it happened that she received some mark of disrespect, far from being troubled or complaining, she only said: "They are right; they do well to speak thus, to treat me in such a manner."

Prayer.

O my God, in Thy eyes I was a demon when sin reigned in my heart. Ought I not fear that I am still one, since I know not but that sin still reigns in me? Grant that this thought may lessen my pride and keep me humble before Thee.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

In my opinion, we shall never acquire true humility unless we raise our eyes towards Our Lord. The soul which considers the greatness of God sees best its own baseness; in considering His holiness it sees better its own unworthiness; when it contemplates His patience it sees how far removed it is from Him; in a word, on fixing her eyes on His divine perfections she discovers in herself so many and so great imperfections that she is penetrated with confusion, and begs Our Lord to deliver her from them.—*St. Teresa.*

From the great knowledge St. Vincent de Paul had of the perfections of God came the lowly opinion he had of himself, and his ardent desire for humiliations. "If each of us," said he to his missionaries, "applied himself to know what he is in the eyes of God, he would certainly acknowledge that it is just and right for him to humble himself. God is so holy, we are so incapable of anything that is good, we have so natural an inclination to evil, so continual a one, we have sinned so often, so grievously. What motives have we not for confusion!"

Prayer.

Who art Thou, O my God, and who am I? Thou art the Lord of lords, and I am nothing. Thou art the Holy of holies, and I am a wretched sinner. I deserve to be with the demons in hell. Lord, have Thou pity on me.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

He who would be a true saint ought not to defend himself, except in a few particular cases, when he is accused unjustly. Jesus Christ has given us the example; for, hearing Himself accused of something He was not guilty of, He did not utter a word to vindicate himself.—*St. Philip Neri.*

St. Vincent de Paul was often calumniated, but he was never heard to complain, nor to say anything to show that he was not guilty. "I shall justify myself only by my works," he said to the Fathers of his Congregation. One

day the Queen told him he had been accused of something she could not think him guilty of. "Madam," he replied simply, "I am a great sinner." When the Queen urged that it was his duty to prove his innocence, he answered: "Our Lord was accused of worse things, and He never justified Himself."

Prayer.

Would I not be covered with confusion if men knew my thoughts, my affections, my works? O my God, dost Thou not know all? Should I not die of confusion when I think that Thou hast seen all?

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

To be reprimanded for one's faults and not excuse one's self is more helpful to perfection than to have heard ten sermons with the best dispositions. It is a sign that one is not ambitious for the esteem of creatures, and in accustoming one's self not to seek excuses in such circumstances one listens as if it were of a stranger they were speaking.—*St. Teresa.*

Father Alvarez having been accused in a provincial assembly of a fault of which he was not guilty, and publicly reprimanded in the most severe manner, he said not a word in his defence, neither at that time nor ever afterwards. Our Lord recompensed his heroic silence by extraordinary favors.

Prayer.

My God, I take the resolution never to excuse myself, never to justify myself. Grant me grace to be faithful to this resolution which Thou hast inspired me to make, as a proof of my love for Thee.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

One of the best means to acquire humility is profoundly to engrave in our minds this maxim: Each one is really only what he is in the eyes of God, nothing more.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

St. Francis of Sales had meditated well upon this salutary maxim; hence the remarkable tranquillity observed

in him, no matter what the opinion of others respecting him might be. Having been calumniated, he said: "If it pleased God, I would wish that my innocence be never known, even at the universal judgment, but that it be eternally buried among the secrets of eternal wisdom." Again he said: "If with the help of God I have done any good works, or if God has made use of me to do anything for Him, I would be well satisfied if, at the day of judgment, when the secrets of hearts shall be made manifest, my justice be seen by God alone, and my injustices be perceived by all creatures."

Prayer.

My God, I renounce pride, self-love, vanity, desire of the esteem and love of creatures. Give me a profound humility of heart and mind. I will make use of every occasion to practise humility.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

All who have had a true desire to become humble have practised humiliation. They knew it was the assured road to acquire that virtue, and that there is none better.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Francis, St. Bonaventure, St. Francis of Borgia, St. Magdalene of Pazzi, St. Teresa, seized every occasion to humble themselves.

We read, in St. John Climacus, of a monk who had a great love of humility, and in order to triumph over temptations to vanity, with which he was often assailed, wrote on the walls of his cell these remarkable words: *Perfect charity. Love of prayer. Entire mortification. Unalterable sweetness. Invincible patience. Angelic chastity. Profound humility. Filial confidence. Perfect exactitude. Admirable resignation.*

When the devil came to tempt him to vanity, he said to himself: "I will prove you have no cause to be vain." Approaching the wall, he read what was written thereon, making these reflections: "Have I perfect charity—I who speak

ill of others? A love of prayer—I who cannot say one prayer without distractions? Entire mortification—I who seek continually to satisfy myself? An unalterable sweetness—I who so often look severely at my brethren? An invincible patience—I who will suffer nothing without complaining? An angelic chastity—I who, neglecting to watch over my senses, allow thoughts that are not pure to find a place in my mind? A filial confidence—I who go so rarely to God as to a father? Perfect exactitude—I who have never performed one action without some imperfection? An admirable resignation—I who find it so hard to submit my will to that of God's?

Prayer.

I have no virtues, I have every vice; how, then, dare I be proud? Grant, O my God, that in justice I may constantly humble myself before Thee. Deign to cast a look of compassion on so miserable a sinner.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

Humility, to be true, should be always accompanied by charity; that is, we should love, seek, and accept humiliations to please God and to resemble Jesus Christ.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Vincent de Paul, whose humility was so sincere that one might read it upon his forehead, in his eyes, and in all his exterior, made humiliations and contempt his delight, to imitate the excessive abasement of the Son of God, Who, he said in one of his conferences, "being the splendor and glory of His Father, not content to lead a life of continual humiliations on earth, wished even to be perpetually represented to our eyes in a state of extreme ignominy, nailed to a cross like a malefactor." St. Jerome relates that St. Paula learning that it was said of her that her piety had made her foolish, and that it would be well to make a hole in the top of her head to give her brains air, the humble servant of God replied immediately, in the words of the Apostle: "It is for the love of Jesus Christ we are foolish."

Prayer.

My God, give me a love of humiliations, that this love may make me desire to acquire humility to please Jesus, to Whom it is so dear, Who so profoundly humbled Himself, and Who teaches His disciples to learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart.

MARCH.

Mortification.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself."—**ST. MATT. XVI. 24.**

FIRST DAY.

The first step for one to make who would follow Jesus Christ, as He Himself says, is to renounce himself, that is, his senses, his passions, his will, his judgment, in fine, every movement of nature. All these sacrifices are agreeable to God and necessary for us. He who, as he thinks, has already one foot in heaven, should he fall in this exercise, when the time came to place the other foot there, would find, instead of being secure, his salvation in danger.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint excelled in the virtue of mortification. He practised it until the last moment of his life, and thus became master of his passions to such a degree that he appeared to have none.

According to St. John Climacus, the hermits who were most advanced in perfection were careful never to abandon mortification, lest by so doing the other virtues they had acquired might abandon them. They said they were like the earth: no matter how rich and fertile it might be, if one ceased to cultivate it it would produce nothing but thorns and weeds.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, with all my heart I renounce myself, to be truly Thy disciple. I make Thee the sacrifice of my senses, my passions, my judgment, and my will. I will do nothing more for my gratification alone.

SECOND DAY.

We should measure our advancement in the spiritual life by the progress we make in the virtue of mortification, holding for certain that in proportion as our zeal increases for being mortified we shall become more perfect.—*St. Jerome.*

When St. Francis Borgia heard it said of any one, "He is a saint," he would reply: "*He will be a saint if he constantly mortify himself.*" It was in the practice of this virtue in particular that he sanctified himself; he looked upon as lost or ill-spent the day he had not practised some mortification either spiritual or corporal. "Why," asked a young anchorite of a holy old man, "among so many who aim at perfection, do so few become perfect?" "It is," replied he, "because to be truly perfect we must die to our inclinations, and very few make this great sacrifice."

Prayer.

My God, grant me the strength and courage necessary to continually combat my natural inclinations, to mortify myself in all things.

THIRD DAY.

Our principal business should be to conquer ourselves, and to become more perfect every day in this practice. It is particularly necessary that we should apply ourselves to be victorious in little temptations, such as vivacity, suspicions, jealousy, indolence, vanity. By so doing we shall obtain the strength to resist greater ones.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

It was asked of an excellent Christian, whose patience was admirable, how he supported without complaining many insults which he received daily from a number of young people who made him an object of derision. He replied: "It often occurs to me to mortify them by answering them; but I say to myself, If I cannot suffer so little a thing, how could I be patient under circumstances where I should have much more to bear?"

St. Francis Xavier often repeated this maxim: "He who does not know how to conquer himself in little things cannot do so in great ones."

Prayer.

Lord, teach me what I should avoid and what I should do to overcome myself. But do not content Thyself to instruct me; assist me with Thy grace; give me the courage which I need.

FOURTH DAY.

He who permits himself to be led and governed by the inferior or animal part of his nature deserves the name of beast rather than that of man.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Philip, Count of Nemours, having led a wicked life, was after a time given by God grace to see the enormity of his sins; he was filled with horror at the frightful state of his soul, and wept bitterly. On his death-bed, penetrated with lively sorrow, he begged those who were attending him to carry him to the public square, and leave him to die without any assistance at the last hour. "I have lived like a dog," he said; "it is but right I should die like one."

St. Vincent de Paul, having converted a great sinner, suggested to him an excellent practice. "Ask yourself often during the day this question: To what am I most inclined? When you find that it is something earthly, renounce it." The penitent was faithful to this practice, and became a perfect Christian.

Prayer.

O my God, I am afflicted because I have never lived as a Christian, not lived even as a reasonable man. I have lived like a beast—like a demon. Now I desire only the sentiments of Jesus Christ, to live by the movement of His grace.

FIFTH DAY.

He who makes little account of exterior mortifications, and says that interior mortifications are more perfect, shows clearly that he is mortified neither exteriorly nor interiorly.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint regarded his body as his greatest enemy. He treated it in a most austere manner, making use of hair-cloth, chains, and a leathern belt bound with iron. Every morning, upon rising, he took a severe discipline. He slept on the plainest bed; he always arose at the regular hour fixed for the community, although his many occupations and infirmities often prevented him from having more than two hours' sleep during the night. When overcome with sleep during the day, he banished it by placing himself in some painful position. In the severity of winter he scarcely ever warmed himself. In a word, he was most watchful to let no occasion pass by without mortifying himself. He might with another saint have said: "I kill my body, lest it kill my soul."

Prayer.

I will look upon my body as a rebellious slave. I will chastise it every day, lest it rule over my soul and cause its eternal death.

SIXTH DAY.

Mortification of the appetite is the A B C of the spiritual life. He who does not know how to suppress the vice of gluttony in himself will only with great difficulty triumph over his other vices. He will be compelled to wage a continual war with them, if he would not have them govern him entirely.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This great saint took merely the nourishment necessary for him. He ate little, always with great modesty, and in the presence of God. He never rose from the table without having practised some mortifications. His preference was for food that was insipid or not well seasoned. One

day eggs were placed before him which were thought to be cooked, but were not. He ate them without saying a word, or showing any repugnance.

We read of Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, that she fasted one half the year upon bread and water; of St. Bernard, that he drank oil in place of wine without perceiving the difference—that it was a torment when he was under the necessity of taking food; of St. Isidor, that he never ate without mingling tears with his bread.

Prayer.

My God, assist me with Thy grace to sanctify my repasts by a fervent prayer and an offering of them to Thee, and by a remembrance of the heavenly bread with which Thou nourishest us at Thy table.

SEVENTH DAY.

One of the things which keeps us far from perfection is, without doubt, our tongue. When one has arrived at that point that he does not sin with the tongue he is perfect, according to the Holy Ghost. This is why we must speak little and well—little and with simplicity, with charity, and in a manner that will make virtue appear amiable.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Louis Gonzaga, before speaking, with fervor addressed to God this prayer of the prophet: “Lord, place a guard over my lips.”

St. Vincent de Paul was so perfect a master of his tongue that he was never heard to say a useless word. When he was overburdened with occupations, which frequently happened, he would only say: “Blessed be God! We must be content with what He sends.”

St. Louis Gonzaga, being one day asked by a companion what means he took to avoid sin in speaking, replied: “Before speaking I think of what I am about to say, and recommend myself to God, that I may say nothing to displease Him.”

Prayer.

My God, I humbly ask pardon for so many sins which I have committed with this tongue, which Thou hast given me to bless Thee. I will punish myself by speaking little, and never of myself without necessity, or against charity or truth, but only to induce others to love Thee.

EIGHTH DAY.

According to the doctrine of the saints, one of the principal means to lead a Christian and exemplary life is to observe modesty of the eyes. If there is nothing more necessary than this virtue to preserve piety in the soul and to edify our neighbor, there is nothing which tends more to sensuality and gives more scandal than the opposite fault.—*Rodriguez.*

The modesty of St. Bernardin was such that his presence alone was a restraint upon those of his companions who were most disorderly. It sufficed to say, "Bernardin is coming," when all conducted themselves in the most orderly manner.

Pope Innocent II., accompanied by several cardinals, visited the monastery of Clairvaux, of which St. Bernard was abbot. The modesty of the saint and of his religious was so remarkable, and it so touched the Pope and those who were with him, that they were moved to tears.

It was asked of St. Clare of Montefalco why she never looked in the face of those to whom she spoke. She replied: "Of what use is it to look upon the face of the one to whom I speak, since it is with the tongue alone that I speak? The eyes of David would not have shed so many tears if he had been more mortified in his looks."

Prayer.

My God, I will make an agreement with my eyes to turn them away as soon as any object excites the fire of passion. Grant that I may raise them to Thee. All creatures pub-

lish Thy perfections and invite me to love Thee; grant that I may understand their language.

NINTH DAY.

Believe me, the mortification of the senses,—of the sight, the hearing, the tongue,—is more beneficial than to wear a chain of iron and the hair-shirt.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A woman confessed to St. Francis Xavier to having regarded a man with looks not pure. “You are unworthy that God should look upon you, since in permitting yourself this satisfaction you have exposed your soul to lose your God,” said the saint. These words so touched the woman that she never after was known to raise her eyes to look upon the face of any person.

It is related of St. Louis Gonzaga, who had been two years at court, that he was asked, when the Empress visited Rome, where he was at the time, whether he did not know her. He replied: “If I were in her presence, I would recognize her voice, but not her face, as I have never looked upon it.”

A person who was not always very prudent in his words asked his director to give him permission to wear a hair-shirt. His confessor placed a finger on his mouth, saying: “The best hair-shirt for you is to pay more attention to all that passes through this door.”

Prayer.

My God, I beg of Thee never let my senses be the door by which sin may enter my heart. I consecrate them to Thee. I will watch without ceasing over myself. I offer myself to Thee as a sacrifice, by continual mortification.

TENTH DAY.

There are some who have so much zeal for practices of mortification that they find means to mortify themselves in all things and at all times. Oh, excellent practice! how beneficial it is!—*Rodriguez.*

St. Francis Borgia studied what were his natural inclina-

tions, and then combated them continually. He blessed God when He gave him an occasion to suffer. He dressed himself in such a manner as to feel the cold of winter and the heat of summer. He wore constantly small stones in his shoes. His bed, upon which he took a few hours' rest in the night, might be called a cross rather than a bed of repose. When under burning suns, instead of seeking shade, he walked more leisurely than ordinarily.

Prayer.

My God, I am convinced of the necessity there is for me to mortify myself in punishment for the many sins I have committed, and to preserve myself from committing others. Grant that I may crucify myself, to imitate my Saviour, Who died on the cross for my sins.

ELEVENTH DAY.

It is interior mortification which should, as much as possible, regulate our exterior.—*St. Teresa.*

When some one asked St. Philip Neri what he should do to sanctify himself, he placed his hand on his forehead, and said: "Give me this, and I will make you a saint;" meaning that sanctity depends upon the renouncement of our will and judgment. "It is the mind and the heart we must mortify before the shoulders," said he to a person who was attached to his own will and wished to punish his body with instruments of penance.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, Who wouldst be a Man of sorrows, for Thy love I will henceforth satisfy myself in nothing. I make Thee the sacrifice of my will; I will deny my inclinations in all things to please Thee.

TWELFTH DAY.

To make progress in virtue, it is not a question of how much to mortify one's self, but to choose the best mortifications. These mortifications are those which are most opposed to our natural inclinations.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

The Venerable Palafox said the reason he had not made progress in virtue was because he had not been watchful to fly from what his inclinations most tended. He who, discovering his vicious inclinations, is not attentive in combating them, goes back instead of advancing in piety, and finally may have the misfortune to lose his soul.

A religious who had been given an employment that did not flatter his self-love, found it an occasion of much repugnance and temptation. In order to triumph over himself, he promised God before his crucifix to remain all his life in this employment if it were the will of his superiors. Having thus conquered himself, all else became easy to him.

Prayer.

My God, I will do violence to myself continually to save my soul. I will do violence to my mind by keeping it recollected. I will do violence to my passions by subduing them without ceasing. Assist me by Thy grace.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

The mortifications which come to us from God, or from men by His permission, are more precious than those which are the offspring of our will. Hold it as a rule, that the less we do from choice or our own taste, the more we shall find in our actions of goodness, of solidity, of devotion, and of profit.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

An excellent religious was in the habit of saying, in the many trials she underwent, "God wills it;" so that she was given the name of *Sister of the Will of God.*

St. Teresa received all crosses, interior as well as ex-

terior, with respect, gratitude, and love; she looked upon them as a proof of God's love, as an inestimable present from a tender father, as precious coin with which she might purchase heaven.

When Our Saviour favored with crosses a servant of God, he said without ceasing, "*Fiat*," Be it done, Be it done, and recited the *Te Deum*.

Prayer.

My Saviour, Thou knowest which are the crosses most salutary for me. I submit to them, I desire them; I receive them with gratitude, and will not cease to bless Thee while I carry them. While I suffer, remember me, and assist me with Thy grace.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The more we mortify our natural inclinations, the more capable we become of receiving divine inspirations and of making progress in virtue.—*St. Francis of Sales*.

We read of many saints who, having the care of sick, and finding within themselves an extreme repugnance to certain maladies, especially wounds or sores, triumphed over their natural aversion so much that they reproached themselves for it as if it were a sin against charity, and even touched with their lips, in a spirit of penance, those wounds from which they shrank at first with such horror. Our Lord recompensed these heroic acts by a chain of graces of predilection, with the assistance of which they arrived at eminent sanctity.

"Is there anything you still cling to?" asked a gentleman of himself,—one who, after a life of wickedness, was at last truly penitent. He remembered that he was still attached to his sword; it had served him well in many an action of bravery, and was very dear to him. "What!" he cried, "shall a sword prevent me from belonging to God alone?" Taking it from the scabbard, he broke the blade. For this sacrifice he received most abundant blessings.

Prayer.

My God, what wilt Thou that I do to show my love for Thee? My heart is ready. Fortify me that I may not refuse any sacrifice Thou mayst ask. If Thou wilt that I die, it will be sweet to die to prove my love.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Many Christians make incisions instead of circumcision. There are few who use the knife of circumcision to cut out of the heart all that is superfluous.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Jerome says of St. Paula that from her youth she applied herself to eradicate from her heart all that she thought disagreeable to God. During the life of her husband, her life was such that it might have been proposed as a model to the ladies of Rome. At his death, finding herself released from obligations to a world she abhorred, she embraced a most austere life. She took little sleep, and that upon the bare floor; clothed with hair-cloth, she spent the greater part of the night in prayer. She fasted rigorously, and practised other mortifications equally severe. When she confessed even the lightest of faults, it was with such abundant tears that, to one who was not acquainted with her, she might be taken for the greatest of sinners. Sometimes it would be said to her: "Do not weep so much; you will lose the sight of your eyes, which is necessary for the reading of holy books. Moderate your austerities, or you will ruin your health." She would reply: "I must disfigure this face which I have tried to make so beautiful; I must chastise this body for which I have procured so many delights. Tears should follow laughter. When one has worn robes of luxury and vanity, should one not bear the rough hair-cloth? I have studied to please the world; now my desire is to please God, God alone."

Prayer.

O my God, by how many ties do I not cling to earth! Break them for me, my God; grant that I may no longer be attached to riches which perish, honors which are vain, pleasures so false.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

He who would advance in perfection should take particular care not to allow his passions to govern him, which will destroy with one hand the edifice he builds with the other. To be master of one's self, it is necessary to begin early to resist our inclinations; for if once deeply rooted and strengthened, there is hardly ever a remedy.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

A holy anchorite, walking one day with one of his disciples in a forest of cypress, commanded him to pull up four of the trees, pointing to those he wished him to take. The first was uprooted without trouble. The second had commenced to take root: it came up with more difficulty. To the third he was obliged to take both hands and employ all his strength, as it had become almost a tree. Coming to the fourth, it was in vain he exerted all his efforts to move it: it was beyond his strength. The holy old man took occasion from this to instruct his disciple upon the necessity of combating our passions in their birth. "My son," said he, "with a little vigilance and mortification one may conquer the passions while they are yet young; when they have sent their roots deep down into the soul, nothing is so difficult, it is even impossible without a miracle of God's power."

Prayer.

Grant me grace, O Lord, to overcome my pride with humility, my attachment to things of this life by a love of poverty, my sensuality by seeking to please God alone.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

By continually mortifying the passions during one month, there is more merit than in practising for years austere mortifications in which self-love perhaps has the greater part.—*St. John of the Cross.*

During the time St. Magdalene of Pazzi was mistress of novices, she spoke frequently to them of the necessity of opposing their natural inclinations if they would advance in virtue, and took every occasion to aid them in this salutary practice. To those who had more taste for prayer she gave more manual exercises, and to those who loved work she gave exercises of piety. She found means to humble those in whom she discovered a great repugnance for the virtue of humility. On one occasion, perceiving that one of the novices had a particular affection for a book which the saint herself had written, she obliged her to burn it. These novices, convinced that their mistress sought only their spiritual good, obeyed and made rapid progress in virtue.

Among many little sacrifices made, the following is related of a nobleman, who was much beloved by his prince, and from whom he received a letter during the time he happened to be making a retreat in a religious house. He felt within himself a strong desire to sacrifice to God the pleasure he would derive from reading this letter from so dear a friend during the time of his retreat. He obeyed this impulse of grace, thereby rendering himself more agreeable to God and bringing down abundant blessings.

Prayer.

My God, give me the spirit of mortification. I would wish to please Thee; to refuse everything to my passions, and refuse nothing that grace asks of me. I will often ask myself, "What does grace ask?" When I have discovered that, I will hasten to obey.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

We must above all labor to mortify, to root out our predominant passion; I mean by this, that inclination, that vice, that bad habit which governs us and leads us into sin. This is the king. When once captured, the battle is won.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Ignatius frequently said to a novice who was of an extremely vivacious and fiery temperament: "My son, conquer yourself, and you will have in heaven a crown more splendid than many others who are more meek of character." One day the master of novices complained of him as being unmanageable. The saint replied: "I think he of whom you complain has made more progress in virtue in a few months than another whom you praise so much has made in a year."

It might be supposed of St. Francis of Sales that he was of a character naturally sweet. It was by virtue alone that he acquired this admirable sweetness with which he ravished all hearts. Anger, he was heard to say, was the passion he had most difficulty in conquering.

Prayer.

Lord, I acknowledge that my pride governs me. I will humble myself without ceasing. I have sought to satisfy myself in all things; I now renounce all self-seeking. I have prayed with coldness and indifference; I will meditate henceforth on the goodness of God, and perpetually adore Him.

NINETEENTH DAY.

Whenever one feels excited with too much ardor, or is over-anxious to perform some action, no matter how holy it may be, if it be possible it is better to defer it till another time, when the heart is tranquil, lest self-love insensibly steal in and soil the purity of our intention.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint never decided any undertaking, or any business, no matter how advantageous it seemed, during the time

that he felt the desire to succeed was purely natural. "The time has not come to decide," he would say; "let us recommend this affair to God."

St. Francis of Sales said one day to St. Jane Frances de Chantal, whom he had not seen for three years and a half: "Mother, we have a few hours in which to entertain each other; which of us shall commence to speak?" "It is I," replied she with much ardor; "my soul has great need of a review." Then St. Francis, wishing to correct this haste, replied with gravity, but with much sweetness: "What! O mother, you still nourish your desires, you have yet a will? I thought to have found you an angel. Let us postpone speaking of what regards yourself until we are at Annecy; let us speak now of the affairs of our congregation." The paper which she held in her hand disappeared, and she conversed with him with the greatest tranquillity upon the affairs of which he had spoken.

Prayer.

My God, I purpose with the help of Thy grace to no longer follow my natural inclinations, to do nothing in haste lest I thereby do my own will. I wish to perform all my actions in Thy presence, as if I heard Thee say: "Thy eternal salvation depends upon the manner in which thou dost this action."

TWENTIETH DAY.

It is in vain that you labor; you will never arrive at true peace of soul until you have renounced all your desires.—*St. John of the Cross.*

In order to conquer sleep, St. Macarius of Alexandria was accustomed to pass entire days without sitting; he was satisfied to take a little repose leaning his head against the wall. He weighed the bread he ate, and measured the water he drank, so that he might take no more than necessary to sustain life. It was by thus combating his inclinations

that he became so perfect, and was so favored by God that he found in meditation a foretaste of the delights of heaven.

Prayer.

My God, I will often say, Deign to take from my heart all affection that is not for Thee. I desire neither riches, honors, nor pleasures in this world, neither the approbation, esteem, nor love of creatures; I desire only heaven, and the grace to arrive there, that I may love, praise, and possess Thee eternally.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

To conform our will to the will of God is what we should desire above all else. In this consists the highest perfection. He who renounces himself most, and most perfectly follows the will of God, will receive the greatest gifts, and make most progress in an interior life.—*St. Teresa.*

Alphonso, King of Aragon, who was considered a wise prince, being asked one day whom he considered the happiest among all men, replied: "It is he who abandons himself most perfectly to the will of God." St. Magdalene of Pazzi, upon hearing only these words, *will of God*, experienced inexpressible sweetness.

"I have never had a bad day," said a poor man unable to labor for his bread; "I am always content. When I am hungry, I praise God; when it rains, I bless Him; when I am despised, when I am injured, I return glory to God, because I will all that God wills, without any reserve. I receive all that happens with joy, as being the best for me. It is this that makes me happy."

Prayer.

My God, I will all that Thou willest. I wish it in the same manner that Thou dost. I wish it because Thou dost. My will is Thine, Thy good pleasure is mine. I desire, I ask only this. Grant that these may be always my dispositions, which Thy grace has implanted in my heart.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

A soul in which self rules, and which is attached to its own will, can have no solid virtue.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi often made the following ejaculation: "My God, I desire but one thing; it is that Thou wilt deprive me of my own will;—no, I will no longer to have a will."

A fervent religious said one day to one of his brethren that it would give him much happiness to serve all the Masses that were said in the morning. The other replied that it was only necessary to ask permission; that he was certain he would not be refused. "No," the first then replied, "I will say nothing; a desire, no matter how holy it be, should not be spoiled by self-will. Obedience is the director of our holiest desires."

Prayer.

My God, destroy in me self-will. Do not permit that I perform a single action of my own will. Grant that I may speak, walk, act only according to Thy will, which is always holy, adorable, and amiable. I desire it to be the rule of my life.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

Mortify your will to such an extent that, if it be possible, you may never satisfy it. Wish that it may be opposed, and rejoice when it so happens. Follow rather the will of others, even when it seems that your ideas are preferable to theirs.—*St. Vincent Ferrer.*

It was according to this principle that St. Catharine of Genoa lived. She congratulated herself when the will of others prevailed over hers. It sufficed with her that her natural inclinations attracted her towards anything to deny herself of it.

Father Sanchez was in the habit of praying that God would refuse any permission he would ask of his Superior if the thing he asked were not agreeable to God.

Prayer.

My God, I would wish never to satisfy my will; I will oppose it without ceasing. I will bless Thee when it is refused me. I will follow the will of others rather than my own, that by so doing I may sacrifice what is so dear to me and what Thou desirest so much.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Let no day go by without trampling under foot your own will. The day upon which you are not faithful to this advice will be a day in which you are not a religious.—*St. John Climacus.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi looked upon as lost the day on which she had not conquered in some way her own will.

St. Catharine of Siena heard these words from Our Lord: "Think of Me, and I will think of thee; think of doing My will, and I will think of what is for thy good."

Prayer.

Lord, give me courage to break my will in all things, to trample under my feet my own desires. In all that I do I will think only of doing Thy will. I would do Thy will with the same love that the saints accomplished it.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

If you would learn in what consists the highest degree of abnegation of our will, it is this: in things that are allowable, to do always as others will, without the slightest hesitation.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Basil, visiting the monasteries of his diocese, desired one of the abbots to tell him if, among all the monks, he found any one in whom he perceived signs of predestination. The abbot presented one to him who was remarkable for his simplicity. The saint requested this monk to bring him water. When he had brought it, "Sit down," the saint said; "this water is to wash your feet." The monk obeyed, showing no hesitation to see the great Basil perform this act of humility for him. Afterwards the

saint remarked: "Here is a man truly dead to his own will, to his own judgment; it is with reason they regard him as one of the predestined." The day following, as the monk entered the sanctuary, Basil ordered him to approach the altar, and ordained him. He became a holy priest.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may die to my own judgment, to my own will. I beg this grace that I may be more agreeable in Thy eyes.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

The greatest gift one can receive in this world from God is the knowledge, the will, and the power to conquer one's self and renounce one's own will.—*St. Francis of Assisi.*

The abbot Pasteur was in the habit of saying that our own will was a wall of iron, which keeps us at a distance and separates us from God.

The blessed Colette esteemed the mortification of her own will of more importance than the renouncement of all the riches of the world. "All evils have their growth in one root," said St. Bernard; "it is our own will."

During a time of great suffering with St. Francis of Assisi, one of the Brothers with much simplicity said: "My Father, pray that God may lighten your sufferings; His hand is too heavy upon you." The saint replied: "Only your simplicity excuses you. I would send you where I could not look upon you again. How have you the audacity to disapprove of the just judgments of God? O my God!" added he, "the accomplishment of Thy will is the greatest consolation I can receive in this life."

Prayer.

My God, teach me the manner to renounce my will. Grant that I may desire ardently to do so; assist me to do it perfectly. I beg that my greatest consolation here may be the accomplishment of Thy holy will.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

I advise you not to indulge your own judgment. If you do, it is beyond a doubt that it will inebriate you, as there is little difference between an intoxicated person and one who is attached to his own opinions; one has no more reason than the other.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Francis of Paula, founder of the Order of Minims, although gifted with prophecy, always took counsel, even in the least things, with those who made it a glory to obey him.

The Blessed Alexander Souli, Bishop of Corsica, who was very learned in theology, who was the director of St. Charles Borromeo, and who was called the model of bishops, never decided affairs of his diocese without consulting enlightened persons. He remembered the words of the Holy Ghost, Who says: "Do nothing without counsel."

Prayer.

My God, for love of Thee I renounce my own judgment. I will no longer be attached to my own opinions. I will undertake nothing important without taking counsel of others.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

The least attachment to our own opinions, to hold them in great esteem, is infinitely contrary to perfection. It is the last thing one abandons; hence the reason why so few are perfect.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint wrote to one of his friends that he was not so attached to his opinion as to wish harm to those who did not follow it, nor did he pretend that his sentiments should serve as a rule for any one.

The learned Suarez often charged his disciples to examine his works, and said that he would not hesitate to change what they disapproved of. St. Vincent Ferrer did the same; so afraid were these men of God that self-love might blind them to their faults.

Prayer.

My God, my reason is so short-sighted, my light but darkness; self-love blinds me often. I will no more be attached to my own judgment; I will doubt my opinions. I will be docile to the advice which is given me.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

Do not think too highly of your own ideas. If your advice is asked, give it frankly, but with perfect indifference as to whether it be followed or rejected. Follow rather the advice of others than your own in all things permissible.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

The disciples of the Abbot John, who was celebrated for his sanctity, seeing him at the point of death, begged him to leave them some lessons by which they might arrive at perfection. He spoke as follows: "I never followed my own opinions, but taken the advice of others; and I never exacted from others what I had not before practised myself."

When St. Jane Frances was consulted upon any important affair, having prayed long, examined well everything pertaining to it, and taken counsel with wise persons who were filled with the Spirit of God, she gave her opinion and added these words: "This is my advice; but take counsel of some one else who is more wise and judicious than I am."

Prayer.

O my Saviour, Who art the true light, wisdom uncreated, enlighten me, give me wisdom; I will no longer be governed by my own ideas, nor act for myself. I will decide by the advice of wiser ones than I, who are full of Thy spirit, having prayed that they may be enlightened to give me salutary counsel.

THIRTIETH DAY.

Since holiness consists in willing what God wills, wisdom consists in judging of things as God judges; and who can say that his sentiments are always according to God's? How many times have you not been compelled to acknowledge that you have been mistaken in your judgments?—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint was gifted with such great prudence that he was reputed to be one of the wisest men of his time. Nevertheless, the lowly opinion he held of himself caused him, upon all occasions, to recommend himself to God, and to pray fervently to be directed. If he was consulted upon anything, he gave his advice modestly, after having taken time for reflection; but if he was slow to decide, he was as firm to continue in any good work which he had undertaken with counsel, and after having prayed for guidance to know the will of God.

Prayer.

My God, I am resolved to do nothing without having recommended myself to Thee, nor without advice. Do not permit me to go astray, nor contrary to Thy will.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

The means of dying to our sensuality is to deny ourselves all that flatters our senses. The means of dying to our own judgment is to submit in all things to the opinions of others. The means of dying to our self-love and the esteem of creatures is to make continual acts of humility. He who does not die in this manner will never be a true servant of God; God will never perfectly live in him.—*St. Magdalene of Pazzi.*

St. Philip Neri made war constantly against these three enemies of man. He mortified his flesh by combating earthly desires, and chastised it by the most rigorous instruments of penance and by fasting. He mortified his judgment, his will, by blessing God in all he suffered either from the hands of God or of man, and in following the sentiments of others rather than his own, and by practising

obedience as far as possible. He mortified his natural inclinations, which sought after the esteem and praise of men, by reflecting on his sins, by putting himself in thought at the feet of all, by rejoicing when he was despised, even seeking occasions for humiliations. A universal mortification was the path by which the saints who now live in the glory of God won their crowns in heaven.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may die to my sensuality. I would chastise my criminal flesh, and combat my disorderly desires. I will bless Thee in all the crosses with which Thou mayst afflict me; I will follow another's advice, rather than my own, in all that is permitted; I will practise obedience to those who rule over me. Let me die to myself, to the esteem of men. I will not cease to humble myself for my sins, my inconstancy of heart, and my many frailties.

APRIL.

Patience.

"He that does not take up his cross and follow Me, is not worthy of Me."—ST. MATT. x. 38.

FIRST DAY.

The cross is the true door by which to enter the temple of holiness; it is not possible to find it by any other way. Therefore, we should immolate our hearts, for the love of Jesus Christ upon the same altar of the cross upon which He sacrificed Himself for our love.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Teresa for eighteen years suffered great dryness during the time of prayer; it was for her a kind of martyrdom. Nevertheless, she continued in her exercises of piety with the same exactness as during times of fervor. St. Bernard said of himself: "All those things that the world loves,—such as pleasures, honors, riches,—are for me a cross, and all those that the world regards as crosses are to me pleasures; I embrace them with affection."

Prayer.

O my Saviour, I immolate my heart for love of Thee on the altar of the cross. I am disposed to receive all the crosses Thou sendest; grant that I may use them for my salvation. How advantageous for me to be crucified with Thee!

SECOND DAY.

If you have nothing to suffer for God, be assured that you have not commenced to be one of His servants. The Apostle plainly tells us that those who would live piously in Jesus Christ must suffer persecution.—*St. Augustin.*

St. Francis Xavier, while at Lisbon, was afflicted to see that everything prospered with him. He was afraid that

God was not pleased with him when He favored him with no cross. And when sufferings were sent to him, he would exclaim: "Still more, my God, still more!"

Prayer.

Lord, look with compassion upon Thy servant for whom Jesus Christ has suffered and died upon the cross. Grant that I may carry with patience, gratitude, and love all my crosses; Thou sendest them but to purify me and give me an occasion of merit.

THIRD DAY.

The Son of God has accomplished our salvation by the means of sufferings; He would by this teach us that there is no means more proper to glorify God and to sanctify our souls than to suffer. Yes, yes, to suffer for the love of Christ,—this is the true road.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi, being shamefully treated in her last sickness, gave special marks of friendship to the person from whom she received the injury; she rejoiced to have this beautiful occasion, before her death, to suffer. She sometimes said: "I do not wish to die soon, because in heaven one cannot suffer; I desire to live long, so that I may suffer long for love of my Spouse."

Prayer.

How is it possible that I have such repugnance for sufferings, knowing that Jesus Christ has suffered for me, and to suffer for Him is an advantage the just of the earth have, but the saints of heaven do not possess? My God, give me a love for suffering.

FOURTH DAY.

The road to heaven is narrow. He who would walk therein with ease must divest himself of all things and lean upon the cross for support;—that is, he must be resolved to suffer all things for the love of God.—*St. John of the Cross.*

Venerable Tauler tells of a great servant of God who, fearing that the great consolations he received on earth would be an obstacle to the obtaining of the delights of heaven,

begged of Our Lord to deliver him from them. His prayer was heard, and during five years he was left without the least spiritual consolation. Having then tasted of the sweets with which Our Saviour inundated his soul, he said: "I desire no consolations in this world; I would that only Thou, O my Love, wouldst enter my heart. It suffices for me on earth that Thy holy will be accomplished in me."

Prayer.

My God, I acknowledge the necessity there is for me to suffer by mortification when I have no tribulations to suffer. I firmly believe the road to heaven is narrow. Grant that I may desire to live and die upon the cross for Thy love.

FIFTH DAY.

Our Lord is accustomed to recompense by some tribulation the services of those who love Him. Tribulations are of an inestimable price to those who love Thee, O my God! What would one not give to know their value!—*St. Teresa.*

When the Venerable Palafox had done some good work, and saw that he was calumniated or received some other cross, he said: "I do not receive in this world the reward of that which I do for God; it is a sign that He will fully recompense me in heaven."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may be so convinced that crosses are favors that when I suffer nothing I may be afflicted that my Saviour regards me as unworthy to suffer something for Him; and when I have a cross to bear, it will be with joy to be treated as one of His friends.

SIXTH DAY.

O souls! you who sigh after tranquillity and consolations, if you knew how agreeable it is to God, and how advantageous for you, to suffer, you would never seek consolation in anything whatsoever, but would regard it as your greatest happiness to carry the cross and follow Jesus Christ.—*St. John of the Cross.*

Jesus Christ made known to St. Teresa that the souls dearest to His Father are those who suffer most, who suffer

with most love. From that moment sufferings were her delight. She declared she would not exchange her sufferings for all the treasures of the world. Her motto was, "Suffer or die."

Prayer.

Yes, my Saviour, it is a great happiness to carry the cross after Thee. All the treasures of earth are not worth one cross. Grant that when I suffer it be with love of Thee, that it be my delight.

SEVENTH DAY.

One *Blessed be God* in the time of adversity is worth more than a thousand *I thank you* in the time of prosperity.—*St. John of Avila.*

It was asked of the Blessed Angela of Foligno how she could suffer with such joy. She replied: "Believe me, we do not know the price of sufferings; if we knew their value, sufferings would be for us an object of strife, each trying to rob the other of occasions to suffer."

Prayer.

I acknowledge, my God, nothing is more precious than the cross. Nothing is more beneficial than to suffer with resignation, with love, in union with Jesus Christ. I love the cross;—why should I not love it? Grant me the desire to suffer, and to suffer with joy.

EIGHTH DAY.

One ounce of a cross is worth more than a million pounds of prayers. To be crucified during one day is of more value than performing pious exercises for a hundred years. It is more meritorious to be for one moment on the cross than to taste the delights of paradise.—*Venerable Sister Victoria Angelini.*

St. Francis, during a severe illness, endured the most terrible sufferings. He was entreated by one of his religious to beg Our Lord to lighten his afflictions. The saint reproved him, and said: "Lord, I return thanks for that which I suffer. I beg of Thee to increase rather than diminish my pain."

Prayer.

I promise Thee, my God, to pray often, during suffering, in these words: "My God, I thank Thee for sending me this. I suffer only for my good, for my salvation. Thou hast placed me on the road to heaven: grant that my gratitude may be in proportion to my sufferings. Spare me not in time, that I may meet with mercy in eternity.

NINTH DAY.

If Our Lord gave you the power to raise the dead, He would give you much less than when He sends you sufferings. You would be indebted to Him for the gift of miracles; but in sending you sufferings He is your debtor, if you bear them with patience. Were there no other recompense than to suffer for a God Who loves you, would it not be sufficiently great? He who loves understands.—*St. John of the Cross.*

This saint said that if Our Lord gave him the choice to be placed in heaven among the angels or in prison with Paul, he would prefer the prison to heaven.

St. Louis, conversing with the king of England on the war in Turkey, where he had suffered much, remarked: "I thank God with all my heart for the ill-success of this war. I rejoice more to have practised patience with the help of God at that time than if I had become the master of the world."

Prayer.

Yes, it is a happiness to suffer for a God Who loves us. It is better to suffer with Him than to rejoice with Him. John felt more love for Jesus on Calvary than on Thabor. Grant, O Lord, that these reflections be ever present to my mind; and make me love the cross, make me carry my cross with joy and love.

TENTH DAY.

One should regard it as a disgrace to suffer nothing for God; yes, hold it as certain that he who has nothing to suffer, and whom all the world admires, is not far from a fall.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint, wishing to give some salutary advice to the missionaries of his congregation upon the occasion of a

calamity which had befallen them, said: "Considering that everything has succeeded with us for some time past, I had commenced to fear what would follow this calm, as it is the way of God to try His servants; but blessed be the Divine Goodness that has deigned to visit us with this great loss!"

A holy old man who had passed a year without being sick was much afflicted. "God has without doubt abandoned me, since He visits me no more," said he.

St. Francis and St. Andrew thought that the Lord was not pleased with them the day upon which He did not send them something to suffer for His love.

Prayer.

Lord, am I not in disgrace, since I have nothing to suffer for Thee? Look upon the disposition of my heart. I will prepare for the storm while it is yet calm, so that when Thou visitest me, when Thou triest me, I may embrace my cross and bless Thee while I bear it.

ELEVENTH DAY.

We never have more reason to console ourselves than when we are laboring under afflictions and grievances, since it is this which makes us resemble Our Saviour Jesus Christ. This resemblance is the true sign of our predestination.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Andrew the apostle was well convinced of this truth. The moment he beheld the cross to which he was to be attached he cried out with joy: "O cross so ardently desired, so tenderly loved, and sought after so passionately, I go to you full of joy! Separate me from men, and return me to my Master, that I may be received by Jesus Christ through the same means by which He redeemed me."

Prayer.

O my God, how far am I from loving, desiring, and seeking the cross! Am I not well assured that the cross is Thy livery? that to resemble Thee, and to be glorified, one must carry the cross? With what cross wilt Thou charge me? Behold me, but assist me. I am weak, I am cold and feeble.

TWELFTH DAY.

There is no sign more certain that one is of the number of the elect than, while leading a Christian life, to be the subject of sufferings, desolations, and trials.—*St. Louis Gonzaga.*

A certain merchant begged St. Teresa to recommend him to God. She did so; and having occasion to speak to him some time afterwards, she said: "I have prayed for you, and it has been revealed to me that your name is written in the book of life. As a proof of this I give you notice that, from this time henceforth, nothing will prosper with you in this world." And this was verified. But a short time intervened, when all the vessels he had upon the sea perished. His friends assisted him, and came to his rescue with another vessel to try his fortune again: this likewise was lost. Finding himself in poverty, he became content to possess but God. He finished his life in sanctity.

Prayer.

Labors, sufferings, desolations, opprobrium, this is my lot. I accept, O my God, this chalice of bitterness because I have sinned, and would be crowned in heaven. O my Saviour, grant that I may suffer with Thee, like Thee, and for Thee.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

If the Lord sends you great tribulations, it is a sign that He has great designs upon you, and that He wills that you become a saint. Would you become a great saint, pray that He send you sufferings.. There is no wood more proper to enkindle and feed the fire of divine love than the wood of the cross.—*St. Ignatius Loyola.*

St. Teresa, whom God created to perform such great things on earth, and to be elevated to so high a degree of glory in heaven, had much to suffer from many, even virtuous, persons. They regarded her revelations as illusions of the devil; some would even have her exorcised as if she were possessed. They went so far as to accuse her at the tribunal of the Inquisition. Still more, how her patience must have been tried by contradictions on

the part of her Superiors when she was laboring to reform the houses of her Order and to found new ones!

Prayer.

My God, I have not the courage to say, Give me more to suffer, because I fear sufferings ; but I will often say, Give me the cross Thou knowest is best for me ; and when I suffer, I will unite myself to my Saviour and beg the assistance of His grace to bear it.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

It is particularly in the time of contradictions, sufferings, and contempt that those in the Church of God show whether they are of the chaff or the wheat. Under these circumstances, those who are patient and courageous are the wheat, the others the chaff ; and the lighter the chaff is the higher it will rise, manifesting their vanity and pride to greater advantage.—*St. Augustin.*

A gentleman of distinction asked St. Francis of Sales to give a parish which was vacant to a priest of his choosing. St. Francis replied that it was not in his power to grant the request. The gentleman, doubting the saint's word, was very indignant, accusing him of hypocrisy and duplicity. He even used threats, and poured upon him every abuse. St. Francis, seeing that he could do nothing to appease his wrath, listened tranquilly without interrupting him. He said afterwards, when he was asked why he had listened so quietly : "It was not he who spoke, but his passion. My silence will be the cause of his returning some day, and we shall be better friends than ever. While he spoke with so much passion, I occupied myself in thinking of his good qualities, which make him very dear to me." Before long the gentleman hastened back, threw himself at the feet of the saint, begged his forgiveness, and their friendship became closer than before.

Prayer.

My God, come to my help in the time of contradictions contempt, and humiliations ! Grant that I may accept them, that I may enter into the sentiments of Our Saviour, and

that they may be salutary for me and for the edification of my neighbor.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

A true spirit of Christianity gives more a desire for afflictions and spiritual dryness than for those feelings of a sweeter kind. In this we follow Jesus Christ and renounce ourselves, which He has so much inculcated.—*St. John of the Cross.*

Our Lord gave to St. Catharine of Siena the choice of two crowns, one of gold, the other of thorns. Without hesitating, she chose that of thorns. From that moment her love for suffering was so great that she said: "Nothing is so agreeable to me as the cross. If God gave me the choice to go to paradise or to remain longer here to suffer, I would choose to remain on earth. I know it is by the means of suffering we merit the glory of heaven."

Prayer.

My God, it is only by humiliation, prayer, and patience that I can arrive in heaven. Grant me these graces: to pray always, to be humble, to mortify myself, and to suffer with joy.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Those who have arrived at perfection never ask of God to be delivered from afflictions or temptations; they long for them and esteem them as much as worldlings appreciate gold or precious stones. They know that the time of affliction and temptation is the time to enrich one's self in grace.—*St. Teresa.*

When St. Francis Xavier received a cross he always made this prayer: "My God, do not take from me this cross unless it be to give me a greater." The Venerable Anne-Marie of St. Joseph, a Carmelite, was asked to moderate her great austerities. "No," she replied, "I will never cease to carry my cross, since Jesus Christ was loaded with sorrow and opprobrium. I desire only a cross, to be crucified thereon with Jesus Christ."

Prayer.

My God, I will not fly from the cross; I will desire it, I will embrace it, I will carry it; I will beg nothing but to

be charged with it. What is more precious than the cross? What is there that makes us more like unto Jesus Christ? It is the great means to enrich one's self for heaven. O my Saviour, grant that I may passionately desire the cross.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Embrace often, and with your whole heart, the crosses which Our Lord sends you, whatever they may be. The lowest are most worthy the name of cross, being least in conformity with our natural inclinations, which seek ever that which is high and noticeable. The merit of the cross does not consist in its weight, but in the manner in which we carry it.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

During the visits of this saint through his diocese, when he had much to endure, he was never heard to complain of the cold, the wind, the sun, his lodgings, or his food. He received all in peace from the hand of God, and was happier in proportion as he had much to suffer. When it was in his power, he always took for himself that which was worst.

A holy religious at the moment of death said to his brethren: "I am now like one who has made a great purchase, who with a few pieces of money has bought much in return. I am about to be put in possession of heaven for a little suffering here."

Prayer.

O Jesus crucified, I understand how necessary it is for me to have crosses. I beseech Thee to give me those which are best for me. I accept from Thy fatherly hand all that Thou sendest, even the most humiliating. Teach me to carry them with courage and with love.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

If we knew the precious treasure which is hidden in our infirmities, we would receive them with the same joy that we receive the greatest benefits, and we would bear them without complaining.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint suffered from many infirmities, which gave him no repose night or day. He bore them with admir-

able patience. His face was always serene, his countenance affable, as if he enjoyed perfect health. From his lips was never heard a complaint. He never ceased to thank God for his infirmities, looking upon them as favors. When his sufferings were extreme, his only strength was to look upon his crucifix and to utter aspirations of patience. "I suffer little in comparison with what my sins deserve, and what Jesus Christ has suffered for our love," he would say. A brother-missionary one day said: "The pains which you endure must be almost insupportable." The saint replied: "How can you call that insupportable which is the work of God? May God forgive you for what you have said. It is not thus one should speak in the school of Jesus Christ. Is it not just that the guilty suffer and be chastised? Has not the Lord a right to do with us as He wills?"

Prayer.

O my God, can I complain, can I suffer with impatience, seeing what my Saviour suffered in the Garden of Olives and on Calvary, and thinking of what I should suffer in hell if Thou hadst not treated me according to Thy great mercy?

NINETEENTH DAY.

What is better than to be on the cross with Jesus Christ or to cling to the foot of the cross meditating on the sufferings of Our Saviour? To offer to God our infirmities in remembrance of Him Who suffered for us, and to conform ourselves to His will,—this is an excellent manner of praying.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

When St. Vincent de Paul was very sick he practised a most excellent method of prayer. It is as advantageous as it is easy, and procures much sweetness for those who love God. It consists in keeping one's self in the presence of God without making any reflections, contenting one's self with making frequent acts of resignation to the will of God, of confidence, love, and thanksgiving.

Prayer.

O my God, happy are they who suffer with patience and with love in union with Jesus Christ suffering, and are disposed to suffer still more and to die. Grant that I may suffer in this manner.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Be assured that we shall obtain more grace and merit in one day by suffering patiently the afflictions which come to us from God or from our neighbor than we could acquire in ten years by mortifications and other exercises which are of our own choice.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A great servant of God who suffered much made use of the following prayer : “ Lord, if Thou augment my pains, augment my patience.” “ Courage,” he would say; “ with a little patience the good thief paid all his debts and gained heaven.”

Prayer.

Lord, I will not cease to fortify myself and to bless Thee for my afflictions, to pay the debt which I have contracted against Thy justice for my sins, and to gain heaven, of which I have made myself unworthy.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

He has not true patience who will suffer only as much as he pleases and from whom he pleases. The man who is truly patient considers not the length of his sufferings, their quality, nor the person from whom he receives them.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

A pious lady, desirous of laboring more earnestly for her sanctification, begged of St. John Chrysostom to instruct her in what she must do. The saint advised her, among other things, to take into her house an aged or infirm person, to take great care of her for the love of God, bearing patiently anything she might have to suffer in exercising this charity. She took a poor widow, and cared for her. This poor woman had a heart full of gratitude, and never ceased thanking the lady for her kindness, thereby

distressing her, as she had then nothing to suffer in performing her work of charity. She therefore complained of this to the saint. He said: "I will send you another, in whom you will find occasions to exercise your patience." It was an old woman who was most ungrateful, who thought that all that was done for her was nothing, who complained unceasingly, who even repaid the kindness shown her with injuries and abuse. The lady bore these indignities with heroic patience, and thanked St. John, saying: "You have given me exactly what I needed."

Prayer.

My God, I consent to suffer as long as Thou wilt, all that Thou wilt, and from whom Thou wilt. Give me these dispositions; deign to strengthen and keep them in my heart.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

Our Lord sends us tribulations and afflictions to give us a means of paying the immense debt we have contracted against Him. Accordingly, those who are sensible will receive them with joy, and think more of the good they may derive from them than of the pain they may feel.—*St. Vincent Ferrer.*

This saint, to make his hearers understand better this truth which he had preached to them, related the following parable: "A king held in prison two of his subjects who owed him a sum of money. Seeing them incapable of paying it, as they possessed nothing, he went into the prison and threw a purse of gold at the head of each. The blow was painful, and it was received in quite a different manner by the two. One was enraged at being so struck, showed much ill-feeling, and took no notice of the purse; the other, more reasonable, took the purse which had been thrown at him, and thanking the king, used the money to pay his debt, thus delivering himself from prison. Our case is that of these prisoners," said the saint; "we have contracted immense debts against God, through the benefits He has bestowed upon us and the sins of which we have become guilty. Touched with compassion for our state, He sends the gold of patience in the purse of tribulation.

Those who bear these tribulations with patience with this gold satisfy God and become His friends, while those who, far from thanking Him, murmur and are impatient, increase their debt and make themselves still greater enemies of God."

Prayer.

O my God, what debts have I not contracted against Thy justice! I can cancel them by suffering for love of Thee. When Thou sendest me no cross, let me impose one upon myself by practising some mortification.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

Be very patient when it happens that you are contradicted or crossed in conversation. These contradictions serve as occasions to practise those dear and amiable virtues which Our Saviour recommends.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A servant of God, who loved contradiction, said: "It is of great advantage to be contradicted; it often shows we are wrong; it takes away perhaps an occasion of having sentiments of self-love, and gives us an opportunity of merit, by loving supernaturally those who do not think as we do."

St. Francis of Sales said to a person who had shown him much animosity: "Although you do not love me, still I will love you; and should you deprive me of one eye, I will look upon you with kindness with the other."

Prayer.

My God, grant that all that is said to me which mortifies me may tend to my sanctification and enable me to practise humility and charity.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

If there should be any community in which was found no religious of a disagreeable character, whom it was hard to bear with, it would be of much value to seek for one elsewhere, and pay for him with his weight in gold, because of the great advantage he would be to those who knew how to support his faults and to make good use of the crosses he would provide them with.—*St. Bernard.*

When St. Philip Neri lived in Rome, in the house of Saint-Jerome-of-Charity, he was disliked by the sacristans, who

took every opportunity to annoy him, and let no day go by without showing him some marks of contempt, hoping he would by this treatment be obliged to go to another church to exercise his ministry. The saint never complained to the Superiors of the house. Far from showing any resentment, he treated his tormentors with respect, and did them every service in his power. "I will not fly from the cross which God sends," said he to his friends who invited him to leave the place. However, seeing that he could not win them by charity and humility, that instead of becoming kinder they became more intractable, he addressed himself to Jesus Christ. Fixing his eyes on the cross, he said: "My good Jesus, why dost Thou not hear me? For a long time I have with much ardor begged for patience. Why dost Thou not listen to my prayer?" He seemed to hear within him the voice of Jesus saying: "Thou askest Me for patience. I will give it to thee, but I desire that thou acquire it in this place." From that time, the house which had been for him a place of sufferings became a place of delight. He remained there for thirty years, and quitted it only at the request of the Pope, to take up his abode in a house of the Oratorians, of which Order he was the founder.

Prayer.

My God, grant me the grace to support patiently, for love of Thee, the faults of those with whom I live. Grant that the more they make me suffer the more I may love them.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

There is no purgatory in this life; it is either paradise or hell. Those who suffer with patience have a paradise; those who do not suffer a kind of hell.—*St. Philip Neri.*

A wicked man, condemned to death for his crimes, asked, a short time before his death, to see a religious of a certain Order. The religious was sent to him. The prisoner said: "Father, I have lived among you, I have worn the habit which you wear. Admitted to the Order, I was for

some time a good religious. While I observed the Rule faithfully, I was content; nothing was hard; the most difficult things I performed with joy. Ah, how desirable was my state! Unfortunately, little by little I relaxed in my fervor; then a distaste for the exercises of the community grew upon me. Unfaithful to my obligations, the yoke of my vocation became insupportable. I fled from the house, and abandoned my religious habit. Alas! my state became worse and worse; I gave myself up to all kinds of excesses. You see to what my sins have brought me. I have called you, Father, that you may tell your religious what you have heard. God grant that my example may be useful to them!"

Might we not say that St. Francis of Sales tasted the delights of paradise during a sickness which he underwent? He spoke of himself as if he suffered nothing, never giving any signs of impatience or uneasiness, taking the most disagreeable remedies as if they were most delicious. A serenity unalterable was observed upon his countenance, which was sufficient to attract one to the love of virtue.

Prayer.

My God, teach me to possess my soul in peace, to bless Thee always and for all, to rejoice even in tribulations, and to do in all things Thy will.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

My sisters, learn to suffer something for Jesus Christ without letting others perceive it.—*St. Teresa.*

Father Dupont, meditating one Good Friday on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, asked of Our Lord as a great grace to make him a participator in His sufferings. His prayer was heard, and during the rest of his life he suffered frightful agonies. One day a religious of his Order asked him how he felt. He replied: "Oh! God chastises well this sinner. With the exception of the head, there is not a member of my body but has its particular

pain." Immediately repenting for having spoken in this manner, he made a vow never to speak of what he suffered, when it was possible to hide it without offending God.

St. Philip Neri, who was often afflicted with many infirmities, always appeared content. He never spoke of his pains except to his physician. He was never known to show signs of suffering.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, give me a love for suffering. Grant that when I suffer I suffer for Thy love, and, to show my love for Thee, suffer in silence.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Those who aspire to perfection must be careful never to say, "I was right; I have not deserved to be treated in such a manner." If you will carry only a cross that is supported by reason, you will never become perfect.—*St. Teresa.*

A servant of God was once much afflicted on account of calumnies reported of him, in consequence of which he was persecuted by some, despised by others. Full of bitterness of soul, he addressed himself to God: "O my Saviour," he said, "how long wilt Thou permit that I be treated thus? Thou knowest that I am not guilty of that with which they accuse me." He thought he saw Jesus Christ covered with wounds, and to hear these words: "And I, for what fault have I been treated thus?" At this sight, upon hearing these words, he regarded it as a happiness to be calumniated, persecuted, despised; he would not, he said, exchange his condition with that of the greatest king on earth.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, Who wast treated so shamefully without having committed any fault, grant that I may consider it a happiness to suffer for Thee. Ought the disciple of a Man-God not rejoice to be treated like his divine Master?

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

If we regarded tribulations with the eye of the Christian, how happy would we be to be calumniated, to be looked upon as vile ! Is it not an advantage to be persecuted for doing good, since Jesus Christ calls blessed those who suffer for justice ?—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Teresa never ceased to bless and praise God whenever she found an occasion to exercise patience. Returning one day from the parlor, seemingly full of joy and with a sweet serenity of countenance because she had received reproaches and abuse, one of her religious who had overheard what was said to her asked how she could feel so contented. “Thank God,” she replied, “they have said that of me which has given me much pleasure. Thank God.” It was thus that she always conducted herself upon such occasions. When she seemed more than usually happy, her religious always said among themselves: “Our mother has been receiving something good.”

Prayer.

O my Saviour, I believe, because Thou hast said it, that those who suffer for justice’ sake are blessed. Whenever I suffer for a good cause I will thank Thee for giving me an occasion of enriching myself for heaven.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

If you look upon the ground at the rod which Moses used before Pharaoh, it appears a frightful serpent ; but if you regard it in the hand of Moses, it is a wand with which he performed the greatest prodigies. So it is with tribulations. Considered in themselves, they are horrible ; but when one views them in the hand of God, they become sweet and delicious.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi was accustomed to say: “I think there is no torment in the world so frightful, no adversity so hard, that I would not suffer voluntarily and with joy for the single thought alone that it is the will of God.” In the time of most acute suffering it sufficed for her to re-

peat the words, "It is the will of God," when instantly she was filled with joy.

Prayer.

O my God, I will receive all tribulations from Thy fatherly hand with joy. I will think that Thou chastisest me for my good as a tender father. I will bless Thy name because Thou strikest me here to spare me in eternity.

THIRTIETH DAY.

When it happens that we have sorrows to endure, or something to suffer from the hand of others, let us recall what Our Saviour has suffered; then all will become easy, even sweet; all that before seemed hard will appear to be flowers, not thorns.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Ludowine was overwhelmed with great afflictions for thirty-eight years, yet she was never seen to be unhappy or ill-humored; she was always content, because she never lost sight of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. In order to think always of this she scarcely ever turned away her eyes from the image of Our Saviour nailed to the cross.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, Who wast crucified for my love, I will fix my eyes upon Thee when I suffer, and say: "Behold thy God upon the cross! Complain if you dare!" I will refuse no cross; I ask no other recompense for all the crosses than the happiness of pleasing Thee.

MAY.

Meekness.

Learn of Me that I am meek and humble of heart.—ST. MATT.
xi. 29.

FIRST DAY.

Meekness is a rarer virtue than charity; it is more excellent than this or any other virtue, being the fulness of charity, which is in its perfection when it is meek and beneficent. We must then have a great esteem for meekness and labor to acquire it.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint spoke frequently of meekness, and it was plainly evident that this was his most cherished virtue. It shone in his face, his words, his gestures, and his actions. The eulogy which the Holy Ghost gave to Moses might be applied to him—that he was the meekest man of his time. St. Jane Frances said of him that no one ever saw a heart so sweet, so good, so affable, so gracious as his. The first time that St. Vincent de Paul saw St. Francis of Sales he thought, from the serenity of his face and his manner of conversation, he saw in him an image of the sweetness of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. His presence alone won hearts.

Prayer.

My God, grant that sweetness may mark my exterior, my words and works. Grant that by meekness I may become a copy of Jesus, my Master and model.

SECOND DAY.

Meekness is a virtue which supposes a noble soul; that is, those who possess this virtue are superior to all one may say of them or do to them. Though they may receive indignities from others in word or action, they preserve their tranquillity and lose not their peace of soul.—*St. Thomas Aquinas.*

No one ever saw St. Vincent Ferrer angry, or even troubled, no matter what injurious things were said of him or what ill-treatment he might receive.

St. Francis of Sales was at one time vilely calumniated. When he learned that he was accused of an abominable crime, he did not appear to be disturbed, but resolved to wait for Providence to justify him, which did not happen until some years afterwards. He spoke with the greatest kindness of his calumniators, and his only vengeance was to labor for their sanctification.

Prayer.

My God, I beseech Thee, grant that whatever may be said or done to me may not cause me to lose my peace of soul. Grant that I may regard as benefactors those who treat me as an enemy.

THIRD DAY.

There is nothing which tends more to edify our neighbor than a goodness full of charity.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Many persons visited St. Francis Xavier solely for the purpose of witnessing his admirable sweetness.

St. Ignatius Loyola, passing one day with some of his companions near a field where some men were at work, was ridiculed by them, and called names. The saint stopped a moment, looked at them with a smiling face, then turned and gave them his blessing; which so disconcerted them that, struck with admiration, they exclaimed: "It is a saint! it must be a saint!"

Prayer.

My God, make me kind and benevolent to all, especially to those who would do me injury. Deign to bless them. I beg of Thee to pardon them and grant them Thy grace.

FOURTH DAY.

It is necessary to be sweet with all, and to treat every one with a manner full of tenderness and Christian charity. Affability, love, and humility are the virtues which admirably serve to gain the hearts of men, and to animate them to perform what is hard and repugnant to nature.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Francis of Sales, by his great sweetness, obtained

everything he asked for. No one could resist him, because he won all hearts, treating every one with respect and kindness, showing to all a great zeal for their salvation. He was called *the breaker of wills*, because his sweetness was so persuasive that he prevailed upon those to whom he spoke to renounce their own will.

A person had without any cause treated the Abbot Ser-vius with great indignity. He replied with much meekness, so confusing the man that he threw himself on his knees and begged pardon for his fault, and finally asked the abbot's permission to enter his monastery, which was granted him.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may always speak with meekness, and that this meekness come from charity; that the fruit of this amiable virtue gain souls which will burn with Thy divine love.

FIFTH DAY.

One word suffices sometimes to appease a person inflamed with anger, while, on the contrary, it often happens that a word will throw a soul into desolation, and be the cause of many sins.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

It was sufficient sometimes for St. Francis of Sales to say but two or three words to bring calm to the heart of the most afflicted.

St. Macarius, going one day to Neustria, accompanied by one of his disciples, saw a man meet a pagan, who was carrying a heavy load on his back, and insult him. The pagan, laying down his load, ran after the man who had offended him, and taking a stick, struck him so severely on the head that he left him dead on the spot. Having thus revenged himself, he took up his load and continued his way, running to save himself. St. Macarius, meeting him, said: "May God guard and save you!" The man, before so furious, stopped. The saint continued speaking to him with so much kindness that the pagan was touched, and

said: "I know you are a true servant of God. I will not leave you until I have done penance for my sins."

Prayer.

O Jesus, Who hast recommended meekness and humility of heart, and Who hast given us such beautiful examples of these virtues, give us this meekness and this humility which Thou requirest of us. Grant me sweetness in all my words, charity in actions, and true humility of heart.

SIXTH DAY.

It is not possible, as long as we are on this earth, to think exactly as those think with whom we live; therefore it is necessary to have a large fund of sweetness to oppose sudden movements of anger, so that we may not lose the peace of our soul.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Philip II. of Spain once spent several hours of the night in writing a long letter to the Pope. He gave it to his secretary to fold and seal. The secretary had been sleeping, and, half awake, he took a bottle of ink instead of sand to pour over the writing. Perceiving his mistake, he was inconsolable. The king very quietly said: "The fault is not very great, there is still more paper," and sat down the rest of the night to write a second letter, without showing the least displeasure with his secretary.

St. Remi, having foreseen that there would be a great scarcity of food, had a house filled with wheat in order to help his people. Some evil-intentioned person set fire to it. The holy bishop was told. He hastened to the burning house, but seeing that nothing could be done to save it, he approached the fire with a tranquil face, and as it was a cold day, warming himself, he said: "Fire is good at all times."

Prayer.

My God, grant me the grace to possess my soul in peace at all times; permit me never to show feelings of hatred in words or actions, to stifle them immediately with acts of love for Thee.

SEVENTH DAY.

There are some who appear sweet while everything prospers and goes according to their wishes, but at the least adversity, the least contradiction, their sweetness disappears, they are on fire. They may be compared to a coal hidden under ashes. Their meekness is not of the kind Our Saviour asks when He tells us to be like unto Him.—*St. Bernard.*

While St. Francis of Sales was one day preaching at Annecy, a letter was handed to him containing many insults. Thinking it might be of importance to the people whom he was addressing, he interrupted his instruction to read it. Having read it in silence, he continued his discourse without apparent emotion. When he descended from the pulpit, he inquired and discovered from whom the letter had come. Hastening to the persons who had sent it, he begged of them to tell him in what manner he had offended them. When they had told him, the saint assured them that nothing could be farther from his intention than to injure them, and throwing himself on his knees, begged their pardon. The gentlemen were so confused to see the saint upon his knees to them that in their turn they begged his pardon, and enjoyed his friendship ever after, never ceasing to admire a virtue so heroic and Christian.

St. Jane Frances having been grossly insulted by a young gentleman, who was inconsolable because she had received into her community a young lady whom he wished to marry, this worthy daughter of St. Francis of Sales said to her companions: "I never heard a panegyric which pleased me more."

Prayer.

My God, give me meekness which will make me like Thee, a meekness which will show itself in adversity, and by means of which I will never lose my peace of soul when I am contradicted and calumniated.

EIGHTH DAY.

When you are about to make any arrangements, decide upon any affair, or desire to persuade a person to do anything, make it a rule to act with as much sweetness as possible. You will succeed much better by a yielding, humble manner than by taking an austere or disputing tone. Who does not know that one will catch more flies with an ounce of honey than with a hundred barrels of vinegar?—*St. Francis of Sales.*

It was by patience and cordiality that St. Vincent de Paul, who might well be called an angel of peace, succeeded in the numerous affairs he had in charge. He recommended the practice of meekness and affability. "These virtues open the heart," said he, "while severity closes it." He added: "The Bishop of Geneva has converted more souls by his sweetness than by his learning." He repeated what the Cardinal of Perron was in the habit of saying: "I am certain to convince the heretics, but to convert them we must send them to Francis of Sales."

Prayer.

My God, I make the resolution to speak and act always with meekness, and rather to yield humbly than dispute. Grant that by sweetness and affability I may become an angel of peace, that I may gain hearts to Thy service.

NINTH DAY.

If you would labor with fruit in the conversion of souls, it is necessary to throw the balm of sweetness over the wine of your zeal, that it be not too ardent, but good, pacific, suffering, and full of compassion. Human nature is of such a temper that it can be softened entirely only by sweetness.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Francis Xavier, while preaching at Macao in the presence of a great number of infidels, was insulted by the people, who threw stones at him, thinking to silence him. The saint continued, seemingly unconscious of them; which so touched their hearts that they were more moved by his patience and meekness than by what he was saying, and many became converted.

St. Francis of Sales, seeing one day a great sinner confess great faults without contrition, commenced to weep. "Why do you weep, Father?" asked the pretended penitent. "My son, I weep because you do not," replied the saint with much sweetness. This was enough to inspire the sinner with the sentiments of sorrow with which he should have been penetrated.

A great libertine presented himself to St. Philip Neri to confess his sins. The saint received him with much kindness. Having heard his confession, he said, in a tone which breathed of charity: "My son, I do not exact much of you. I ask you to say seven times a day the *Salve Regina*, and to kiss as many times the earth, saying, 'It may be that I shall soon die.'" The man made the promise, kept it, and lived ever after a most Christian life, dying, fourteen years afterwards, in sanctity.

Prayer.

Grant, O Lord, that I may speak to sinners with a sweetness which comes from charity, and which will touch their hearts, that they may see that I am afflicted because they are enemies of God and in danger of being lost.

TENTH DAY.

Those who are entrusted with the care of others should conduct themselves in their regard as God and His angels do; that is, persuade, warn, pray. They should knock at their hearts like a spouse, and if they are refused, bear patiently the refusal. The angels assist as much as they can those committed to their care, and do not abandon those who are obstinate.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint said the directors of souls should imitate Jacob, who regulated his footsteps with those of his children who were small, and even with those of his lambs.

"Those who are to be treated with special sweetness are souls who are difficult to govern," says St. Vincent de Paul. He charmed them in such a degree by his sweetness that he won them to whatever point he wished.

"The more I advance in years," wrote St. Jane Frances to

a Superior in one of her houses, "the more I am convinced that meekness is necessary to gain admittance into a heart, and also to maintain one's place therein. If I have been useful in the sanctification of any soul, it has been by the means of a sweet and humble charity, without employing any other authority than that of cordiality and prayer."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may win hearts and keep them, for Thy love ; grant especially that I may treat with sweetness hardened and obstinate sinners.

ELEVENTH DAY.

As without faith it is impossible to please God, so without meekness it is impossible to please men or to govern them well.—*St. Bernard.*

This saint knew this from experience. For a time after he was made abbot his manner and relations with his monks was severe and austere. Although they held him in high esteem on account of his virtues, he was not satisfied with them, nor were they perfectly satisfied with him. Our Saviour made known to him that he must act with more sweetness. He changed his manner, and soon won their affection ; after which they obeyed him in everything with religious exactitude.

Prayer.

My God, it is not to please men but to please Thee that I wish constantly to practise sweetness. I will try to make those around me love Thy law, that they may practise it for Thy love.

TWELFTH DAY.

I have learned by experience that the best mode of governing is that which is sweet, humble, and patient.—*St. Jane Frances.*

When this saint asked her daughters in religion to do something, even if it was of little consequence, it was with such meekness that they were confused to see to what a degree she humbled herself. When she exacted something

necessary, it was with so much sweetness that she was obeyed with joy and promptness.

St. Vincent de Paul wrote as follows to the Superior of one of the houses of his congregation who had complained with much rigor of a priest in his parish : " It would be advisable to bear patiently with the priest of whom you speak; you have not, perhaps, his faults, but you have others. If you had not this to suffer, you would have no occasion to practise charity. Moreover, your conduct does not much resemble that of Jesus Christ, Who chose for His disciples the rude and lowly, who were, no doubt, subject to many faults. He did this to teach us to practise affability and patience, and to show us the manner in which those who have the office of Superior should conduct themselves."

Prayer.

Lord, I humbly beg the grace to treat those who are in my charge with humility, sweetness, and patience. Grant that if I have something to suffer from them, I may remember that I ought to rejoice to have an occasion to exercise charity.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

There is nothing more bitter than the rind of a nut when it is green; nevertheless, there is nothing sweeter or better when it is preserved. So it is with a reprimand, which in its very nature is harsh, but cooked in the fire of charity, seasoned with sweetness, it becomes sweet, delicious, and very useful.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

When St. Francis Borgia learned that any of his companions had committed some fault, he would say to him: " I beg of Our Lord to pardon you, that I may yet see you a saint. O my brother, how could you speak in such a manner? How could you do such an act?"

St. Vincent de Paul said that it happened but three times in his life that he spoke severely in correcting, thinking that it was necessary to do so; but he repented very soon, as he found the result was not what he hoped for. This

was the manner of his correcting, the means which he took to sweeten the reproof he made, and to make it produce fruit: He never reproached one immediately after a fault, unless absolutely necessary, but reflected always before God upon what he ought to say. He would also show great affection for the person whom he was obliged to correct, and praise him if he could find anything in him praiseworthy. He then would say: "God has permitted that you should commit this fault for your humiliation, and to give you reason to labor with greater fervor for your sanctification."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may never correct but with a true charity, with sweetness, and after asking God to bless what I would say.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The only aim of a Superior should be the love of God and the sanctification of the souls confided to him. He cannot better arrive at this end than by humility, sweetness, and good example.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. John the Canon, during a time when he was prior, was addressed disrespectfully by one of the religious. The saint listened with much tranquillity. One of the brethren asked him afterwards why he had not commanded silence, which he was justified in doing. He replied: "When a house is on fire, is it well to throw on more wood? This good Brother was on fire with anger. Had I replied, his fury, instead of diminishing, would have increased."

"When humility is wanting on one side, charity must abound on the other," wrote St. Francis of Sales to St. Jane Frances. At one time St. Francis of Sales was obliged to imprison a priest who had led a scandalous life and whom he had pardoned many times. The priest begged to see St. Francis, asked his pardon, and promised to amend his life. The holy bishop, moved with tenderness, forgave him once more, and addressed him thus: "I con-

jure you for the love of God, in Whom we all hope, to have pity on me, on this diocese, on the clergy of the Church, whom you have disgraced by your scandalous life, which has given occasion to our enemies to blaspheme our faith. I beseech you to have pity on yourself, and on your soul, which you will lose for all eternity. I exhort you in the name of Jesus Christ to reconcile yourself with God by a sincere penance. I beg of you by all that is most sacred on earth and in heaven, by the blood of Jesus Christ which you trample under foot, by the goodness of this divine Saviour Whom you again crucify, by the Spirit of grace Whom you outrage." The culprit was so moved with these words and by the manner of the saint that he not only never fell again, but became a model of virtue.

Prayer.

My God, grant me the grace to practise humility and sweetness; grant that I may give good example to those confided to my care. May pure charity animate me whenever I have occasion to correct.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

In communities one should prefer union and peace to all else; to possess this we must bear with each other, treat one another with mutual sweetness. This virtue is the source of peace, and a tie of perfection which unites hearts.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

When this saint had some corrections to give, he spoke in such a general way that no one might suspect the person for whom he intended it. He would at times refrain from correcting rather than disturb peace among those whom he wished to see live together as having but one heart and one soul.

A worthy priest who had at one time care of the young persons of the house where he lived never made known any fault of theirs to the Superior, when he found it necessary to do so, without having first begged Our Lord at the foot of the altar to give him the grace not to exaggerate, and to tell also something that was good of the person whose fault he was obliged to make known.

Prayer.

My God, grant me grace to bear with the faults of those with whom I live, to treat them always with sweetness, to unite hearts divided, to inflame in hearts the fire of Thy divine love.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

It is very important to make our conversation sweet and useful. For this end we must be humble, patient, respectful, cordial, and condescending in all things that are lawful. It is above all necessary never to contradict the opinions of any one when not absolutely necessary. Believe me, there is nothing which renders one more pleasing to all than never to contradict any person.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. John Berchmans never contradicted, no matter who the person might be. His companions all loved him, even begged him to admonish them, as though he had authority over them.

St. Vincent de Paul was never heard to dispute even in things most indifferent. His affable manners, the facility with which he seemed to enter into the sentiments of others, his Christian condescension, captivated every one, and in a manner obliged even those who differed with him to be of his opinion.

Prayer.

Grant, O my Saviour, that I may never contradict any one without there be necessity. Grant that I may charitably condescend to all in all things possible.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Let us endeavor to be charitable, meek, and humble with all, but in a particular manner with those whom God has given us as companions and with our domestics. Be not of the number of those who away from their homes appear to be angels, but in their own houses are demons.

Monseigneur Camus, Bishop of Belley, said of the Bishop of Geneva, St. Francis of Sales, that there never was a master who treated his servants better or who was more

tenderly loved by them; he never said a word to them that could wound them. In giving his orders it was like asking a favor. In his manner of saluting them he showed that he loved them. He never complained of them, and was afraid to overwork them. If he was obliged to reprove them, it was done without anger. He was one evening entertaining a marquis. The conversation lasted long, and it became dark. His servants forgot to bring lights. When the marquis after a time arose to leave, the saint conducted him by the hand through the gallery, then through the hall to the door, where he found his servants conversing with those of the marquis. The only reproach he made them was: "With a candle we could have better done the honors to our guest."

Prayer.

My God, grant that for love of Thee I may show those who depend on me that I love them as myself. Grant that I may not overwork them; that I may never rebuke them haughtily nor in ill-humor; and that when I correct them, the correction be seasoned with sweetness.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

Resist faithfully your inclination to impatience, and practise, in reason and against reason, holy affability and sweetness with all, especially with those who give us most cause of trouble.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A certain man who had no occupation often visited the saint, and robbed him of many precious hours. Nevertheless, he received him always with affability, never showing the least sign of weariness. He was asked why he did not dismiss him. He replied that he had never thought of doing so. "He gives me an occasion to practise charity and sweetness," said he.

A Protestant lady, under pretext of having her doubts cleared away, also took much of his time. In reality, what attracted her to him was the admirable sweetness she found

in his conversation. When he perceived this, and having no longer any hope that she would embrace the Catholic faith, he said: "I have answered all your difficulties, and since I cannot succeed in persuading you any further, I will now pray for you, which is all I can do." "I have still one other question," said she; "it is the celibacy of priests. I do not see what can be said in its favor." "Madam," replied he, "this celibacy is very necessary. Had I a wife and children, could I have given you as much time as I have done?" This answer struck home. Grace touched her heart, and she soon afterwards became converted.

Prayer.

My God, make me affable to all, sweet to all, particularly to those who make me suffer. Grant that the sweetness I show them for love of Thee may draw them to love Thee.

NINETEENTH DAY.

The highest degree of meekness consists in serving, honoring, and treating kindly those who are our inferiors and who treat us with ingratitude and insolence.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

What did not St. Jane Frances do during the seven years that she lived with her father-in-law to gain the heart of a servant who was insolent and who treated her with continual contempt! She endeavored to please her in all she could imagine that would be agreeable to her. On seeing the Baroness de Chantal thus humble herself to one who became more impertinent the more that she received kindness, some one remarked: "You but lose your time if you think to win her by such treatment." The saint replied: "That might be if I thought of her alone; but what is done for God cannot be lost, and in proportion that men are ungrateful God is more liberal." "When your father-in-law dies, you will no doubt free yourself from such a wicked creature," some one remarked. "No, I will arm myself then to defend her," she said. "God makes use of her to give me a cross; why should I do her harm?" It was also said to her

that she and not this servant should have the government of the house. "God has regulated it thus for my benefit," she replied, "so that I have more time to give to my exercises of piety."

Prayer.

Lord, give me such charity that I may love those in a special manner who injure me, despise me, and return ingratitude for benefits. I would show them love, to return thanks for Thy love of me notwithstanding my ingratitude.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Watch over yourself that you do not trouble yourself or become impatient over the faults of others. If you saw a person throw himself into the river, would it be wise in you to throw yourself in also because he has done so?—*St. Bonaventure.*

"Do not be astonished that I kept silence while I was abused," said a pious cardinal. "I felt it, but I wished to give reason time to become mistress over passion, lest I might myself fall into the same fault into which he had fallen."

St. Francis of Sales was charged with having shown too much mildness to a young man who was incorrigible in his faults, incapable of listening to reason. "What would you have me do?" replied the saint. "I did my best to arm myself with an anger that was no sin; but to tell the truth, I was afraid to squander in a quarter of an hour the spoonful of sweetness which I have labored during twenty years to collect in the vase of my heart. In trying to save this young man from shipwreck by rigor and severity, I might myself have been drowned with him."

Prayer.

My God, give me strength to conquer myself when I am moved to anger; give me such victory over my passion that I may have courage to be silent, or to speak with sweetness, as proof of my love for Thee.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

At the sight of your imperfections be not discouraged. You should be displeased with them in an humble, tranquil, and pacific manner, not with a displeasure which will throw you into trouble and fret you. Such a displeasure does more harm than good.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Whenever St. Louis Gonzaga committed a fault, he did not become discouraged, but, entering into himself, he said: "The earth has produced its fruit; I know by this what I am." Another would say at such times, in the words of St. Ephrem: "We have not done well; let us do better."

The holy bishop of Geneva would have souls compassionate and encourage themselves to do better by addressing to themselves these words: "Courage, my poor heart; you have again fallen into the pit you have so often taken the resolution to avoid. Let us arise; let us fly to the mercy of God, hoping He will help us to be more constant in future. Let us take once more the road we have abandoned, praying for all necessary strength to keep therein."

Prayer.

My God, grant that my faults may displease without discouraging me. Grant that I be not astonished at them; that they may serve for my sanctification in keeping me humble, in exciting me to pray more, and to watch better over myself.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

Be not afflicted by aridity, nor distractions, nor temptations if you would acquire liberty of mind. Try at such times to preserve your peace of heart.—*St. Teresa.*

When the devil sees that one is courageous in the time of temptation, he almost loses hope of conquering; on the contrary, when he perceives that one fears, he becomes bold. A soldier who is faint-hearted is already half conquered, said St. Antony.

St. Catharine of Siena, when assailed by the greatest aridity, animated herself by saying: "Infamous creature! when you are deserving of darkness, of torments all your life, should you not be glad at this price to avoid those which are eternal?" A simple resolution not to sin again, made during the time of spiritual dryness, is of more value before Our Saviour than a thousand resolutions made with the greatest fervor in the time of consolation, say masters of the spiritual life.

Prayer.

My God, grant that in temptation and tribulation I may not lose confidence, but that I may humble myself, that I may invoke Thee, that I may keep myself united to Thee, and that these trials serve to increase my love for Thee.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

Be always meek and good-humored in the midst of your occupations and your cares. This good example is expected of you.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Athanasius wrote of St. Antony that he was always so happy that each day seemed for him an Easter-day. A stranger going into the desert to see him, and finding him in the midst of the other monks, would be able to distinguish him from the others by the joy and goodness which beamed in his countenance. This great joy, continues St. Athanasius, came from the great hope he had of paradise. His mind was always occupied with things eternal, on which he could not dwell without being penetrated with a holy joy.

Prayer.

My God, give me a great confidence that through the merits of my Saviour I may gain heaven, and that this confidence make me always happy, fill me with joy, and make me bless God in all things.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Thoughts which disquiet us and agitate our minds do not come from God, Who is the Prince of peace; they come from the devil, self-love, or esteem of ourselves. These are the three sources which give birth to all our troubles. Therefore when we have such thoughts we must reject them immediately, and make no account of them.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

The reason why the holy bishop of Geneva was never troubled, never disquieted, and in the midst of the greatest crosses and most serious occupations never lost the peace of his soul, so that it was even impossible to converse with him without feeling a kind of spiritual joy, was that in a manner he laughed at the temptations of the devil and was humble of heart.

St. Antony spoke thus to the demons: "If you had any strength, one of you would suffice to conquer a single man. It is because you are weak that you unite yourselves against me, and try to frighten me. Know that I fear you not."

Prayer.

My God, give me grace never to be troubled in my occupations, my pains, my temptations. Thou art my father. Thou lovest me, I love Thee. Thou wilt have pity on me, I will say to my soul, Why dost thou fear? hope in thy God.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Can there be anything really worthy of disturbing our peace? Should the universe be overthrown, I would not trouble myself. There is nothing in the world that can be compared to peace of heart. Let us do nothing which might endanger our losing it.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Martin was once attacked by a scoundrel who attempted to take his life. He was about to strike the saint with his sword, when, perceiving the saint did not fear him, he said: "What! you are not afraid?" "No," said St.

Martin, "all you can do is to take my life. Death is not an evil, I desire it; it will put me in possession of a sovereign good."

St. Vincent de Paul and St. Francis of Sales never tried to do good by the power of their authority alone, fearing to lose their peace of soul; besides, they knew that the good which is done with an unwilling heart does not long continue. The means they made use of were sweetness and persuasion, begging at the same time that He Who is Master of hearts would give success to that which they undertook for His glory.

Prayer.

My God, give me a good conscience, and peace of heart, which is its fruit. Grant me grace to preserve it in all my occupations, tribulations, and temptations.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

If it be possible, never permit yourself to become angry; never open the door of your heart to this passion under any pretext whatever. You may not be able to drive it away, neither can you control it at will; but should it happen to take possession of you, hasten and gather your forces to preserve your peace of heart, gently, without violence, as it is important not to increase the wound, but soothe it.
—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A servant of God who was naturally of a violent temper often addressed these words to Jesus Christ: "Lord, teach me to be meek." When tempted to anger, he repeated without ceasing these words: Blessed are the meek, happy are they who are meek! When he found that he had fallen into this fault, he hastened to make an act of contrition, gave an alms to the poor, and practised during the day many acts of sweetness.

Prayer.

O my God, happy are they who are meek. My dear Saviour, I will learn of Thee to be meek and humble of heart. Grant that I may practise continually the meekness that Thou commandest.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

The remedies against anger are, first, to prevent it, if possible, or to occupy the mind with thoughts which tend to allay the movements of the heart when excited; second, to imitate the apostles, who, in the time of tempest, had recourse to God, to Whom it belongs to give peace to the heart; third, to do nothing, to say nothing, during the time the heart is agitated, relating to that which gave rise to anger; fourth, to oblige ourselves to make acts of sweetness and humility towards those for whom we feel sentiments of anger.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

The holy Bishop of Geneva having been injured, threatened, abused, some one admiring his heroic patience, the saint said: "Be not astonished at my silence. I have made a compact with my tongue that it never move to say a word of anger against those who may speak ill of me."

A wise man gave to Augustus Cæsar this counsel: "When you feel yourself moved to anger, say nothing, do nothing until you have in your mind gone over the twenty-four letters of the alphabet." "Actions done, words said, in a time of passion, are never directed by reason or religion," St. Vincent de Paul often said.

Prayer.

My God, I will make an agreement with my heart that it will never be open to sentiments of hatred or a desire of revenge. I will make an agreement with my tongue that it will never say an evil word of those who I think have done me ill.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Accustom yourself to have a heart docile, amiable, submissive, which will condescend in all things, and at all times, to everything permissible, for the love of God. For this end, every morning put your heart in a state of humility, of tranquillity, and of sweetness. During the day, from time to time examine if it be not attached to something earthly. In such a case renounce this affection; if you do not, you will never wholly possess peace of heart.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint endeavored, above all things, to make himself all to all. He did this for love of his neighbor and to please

God, because by his lively faith he saw His image in all men.

St. Vincent de Paul recommended the practice of often examining one's self during the day to see whether the heart was attracted by anything away from God.

M. Boudon repeated, without ceasing, these words: "God alone, God alone, and always God alone," lest his heart might become attached to creatures.

The abbot Agatho said that he never retired to rest at night without having first sought and obtained peace for his heart, that he might obey the words of Our Saviour by the prophet: "*Seek peace, and follow it.*"

Prayer.

My God, I wish to make myself all to all to please Thee, and I will not cease to purify my heart, that I may be agreeable in Thy eyes. Give me Thy peace.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

An excellent means to acquire meekness of heart is to accustom one's self to act without precipitation, to speak slowly in conversation, and in a low tone.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint, who made it his delight to walk sweetly in the presence of God, never acted with haste, lest he might lose the spirit of recollection. "You ask me," said he, "how, upon a certain occasion when all around was in such precipitation, I alone was not in haste? What can I say? I was not placed in this world to make disquiet; is there not enough, without creating more?" The modesty with which the saint conversed was ravishing to those who beheld him.

Prayer.

My God, give me the grace to conduct myself without haste, to always possess my soul in peace, to preserve sweetness of heart. How advantageous it is never to lose recollection of soul, and to walk always in Thy presence!

THIRTIETH DAY.

To continually maintain your peace of soul, endeavor to perform all your actions in the presence of God, as if He Himself had regulated the manner of your performing them.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. John Berchmans, who was always the same—always humble, modest, without ever being troubled or losing his peace, never performed an action without first consulting God, and performing it in His divine presence.

One of the Fathers of the desert, being interrogated as to the means he employed to be always composed, always in the same humor, replied: "I often think of my guardian angel, who is ever at my side, who assists me in all my needs, who tells me in all circumstances what I should do, what I should say, and who, after every action, writes down the manner in which I have performed it. This thought penetrates me with such religious respect that I am attentive to say or do nothing to displease him."

Prayer.

Lord, grant that I may see Thee at all times; that I may do nothing that will displease Thee; that I may endeavor to please Thee in all things by doing all things under Thy eyes, in the manner Thou wilt and when Thou wilt.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

A great means to preserve one's peace and tranquillity of heart continually is to receive as coming from the hands of God all things, whatever they may be and in whatever manner they come.—*St. Dorothy.*

"You are astonished because I suffer with tranquillity what you have just heard," said St. Francis of Sales to a religious who had witnessed injurious language addressed to him. "Do you not see that God has ordained, from all eternity, the grace He has given me to support voluntarily this opprobrium? Should I not drink the chalice which has been prepared by the hands of so good a Father?"

"There does not fall a single hair from our head without the order or permission of our heavenly Father. To know this clearly and perfectly," said a great servant of God, "is what renders a soul happy on earth. The cross which would be hell becomes a paradise to those to whom Our Saviour gives a knowledge of this truth."

St. Teresa, having learned that a vessel laden with provisions and goods, bought at Valerne for her monastery, had been lost, gathered her daughters before the Blessed Sacrament to praise and thank God. "I rejoice," said she. "God has willed it; He is Master. It has been done by the hand of God."

Prayer.

Nothing happens, O my God, but by Thy order or permission. All is done by Thy hands. I will look upon everything that happens as coming from Thee. I will not cease to bless Thee in all. Thou art the Master; Thou art my God.

JUNE.

Obedience.

"*All, therefore, they shall say to you, observe and do.*"—ST. MATT. xxiii. 3.

FIRST DAY.

All have a natural inclination to command and an aversion to obey; nevertheless, it is certain that it is more profitable to obey than to command. This is why perfect souls love so much to obey, and find nothing more agreeable.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Teresa often thanked God for the desire He had given her to be obedient; obedience was the virtue in the practice of which she found most consolation.

St. Magdalene of Pazzi found so much delight in obeying that she feared the happiness she experienced might deprive her of the merit of obedience. Not satisfied with being always submissive to her Superiors, she submitted to her companions, even to those who were inferior to her. There was one among them whose permission she always asked in the performance of the least duties.

Prayer.

My God, give me a love for obedience; grant that I may find nothing more agreeable, and that I may do everything through obedience.

SECOND DAY.

Obedience is without doubt more meritorious than any austerity. What austerity is greater than to keep the will continually submissive and obedient?—*St. Catharine of Bologna.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi, who was very mortified during the time of an illness she had, was accustomed to refuse any

delicacy given her; but if they added that she was to take it through obedience, she immediately accepted it, saying only, "Blessed be God."

St. Dositheus, who on account of his great infirmities could not practise the austerities nor follow the exercises of the community of anchorites among whom he lived, labored to sanctify himself by the practice of obedience. He made such progress in the path of perfection by this means that Our Lord made known to him that he would receive a crown in heaven like to that of the great St. Antony. If this seems astonishing, it is because we do not understand the merit of obedience.

Prayer.

O my God, there is no sacrifice more agreeable to Thee than that of the will. I offer Thee mine; I wish that it be always submissive.

THIRD DAY.

Obedience is a penance of the reason; this is what renders the sacrifice more agreeable to God than corporal penance. God loves in you better the least degree of obedience than all the services you could render Him.—*St. John of the Cross.*

This saint, having made his course of theology, was ordered back to his conventual life. His director, who thought he perceived that the science he had acquired gave him thoughts of pride, gave him a catechism, and forbade him to read anything else; he even ordered him to pause at each syllable as children do. John of the Cross submitted. During a considerable time he read no other book; he read it in the manner he had been commanded, and through obedience. By this means he acquired in a high degree this virtue and all others.

Prayer.

My God, give me a love of obedience. I will do promptly, with fidelity and joy, for Thy love, all that is commanded me.

FOURTH DAY.

A single drop of perfect obedience is of a million times more value than an entire vase of the most sublime contemplation.—*St. Magdalene of Pazzi.*

St. Felix, the Capuchin, always showed the most perfect readiness to execute lovingly the orders of his Superiors, no matter what they might be. He carried so far his love for obedience that his Superiors were obliged to refrain in his presence from manifesting their inclinations, lest the saint might regard it as a command and hasten to execute it. The least sign of their will was sufficient to cause him to obey instantly.

Prayer.

My God, I submit to Thee my will. I will only what Thou wilt, and will obey those who hold Thy place in my regard. I will obey them as if it were Thyself.

FIFTH DAY.

It is more meritorious to pick up a straw through obedience than to preach, to fast, or to chastise the body, if in so doing we follow our own will.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Frances, one day whilst reciting the office of the Blessed Virgin, was interrupted many times in the same anthem by her husband calling her. Our Lord manifested in a most singular manner that her obedience was most agreeable to Him.

A holy religious, desiring to animate herself to perform all things through obedience, with eyes upon her crucifix, which she lovingly kissed, would say to her Saviour: *Factus es obediens usque ad mortem*, "Thou wast obedient even unto death."

Prayer.

My God, I desire no longer to do my own will; I will sacrifice it to Thee upon all occasions. Disciple of a God

Who was obedient for me even unto death, how can I refuse to obey?

SIXTH DAY.

The whole welfare of Christians consists in the accomplishment of the divine will; and we never execute better this will than by the practice of obedience, in which is found the destruction of self-love and the true liberty of the children of God. Hence the reason why all truly virtuous souls love so much to obey.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi had much love for obedience, because she knew this virtue preserved her from the danger of self-will. If she was attacked by a temptation, or if she was sick, and was commanded to perform some duty, her face instantly became radiant with joy to have an occasion to obey.

Prayer.

My God, may all my actions be so many acts of obedience! I will not cease to obey, that I may accomplish always Thy holy will.

SEVENTH DAY.

He who possesses not the virtue of obedience does not deserve the name of religious. Why is it that he who is obliged by vow to obedience and fails to keep it entered into religion?—*St. Teresa.*

St. Frances de Chantal at one time gave permission to a religious to use some money for a pressing need in the convent, which St. Francis de Sales had ordered to be employed only in taking care of the sick. She expected to be able to replace it with money a person had promised to give to the monastery. But the saint felt uneasy on the subject, lest she had sinned against obedience. She hastened to write to Francis of Sales. He came to the convent. She immediately threw herself at his feet, accusing herself with tears of the fault she had committed, and ever after she never thought of it without shedding tears, as she herself declares.

Prayer.

My God, I am heartily sorry for having so long sought in all things to do my own will. I renounce it; I ask pardon for having so offended Thee. Let me lose my life rather than refuse to obey.

EIGHTH DAY.

Would you know who are true religious? It is they who by mortification have so subjugated their wills that they know not how to will anything but by the command or advice of their Superior.—*St. Fulgentius.*

St. Teresa was well persuaded of this truth. She said if all the angels told her to do a thing, and her Superior commanded her to perform the contrary, she would obey the order of her Superior. "Obedience to Superiors," added she, "is commanded by God in Holy Scripture; consequently it is of faith. One cannot be deceived in obeying, while revelations are subject to illusions."

Prayer.

My God, I submit to Thee my will. I will nothing in future but that which those command and counsel me who hold Thy place.

NINTH DAY.

Every one who enters religion should leave his own will outside the door of the monastery, that he may have no other will but that of God.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

When St. Dositheus consecrated himself to the Lord in the religious life, he divested himself entirely of his own will, and submitted it entirely to that of his Superior. He made known to him his temptations, his thoughts; and by this entire renouncement of himself, and great openness of heart, he obtained a peace, a tranquillity of soul that nothing could disturb.

Prayer.

My God, I divest myself of my will for love of Thee. I will have no will but Thine. What divine peace does he

not taste who is conducted like a child, who wills what Thou willest and because Thou willest it!

TENTH DAY.

Many religious as well as other persons have become saints without passing much time in exercises of piety ; but not one of them became a saint without obedience.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A lay-Brother in the monastery of St. Bernard was dangerously ill. The saint visited him, and encouraged him by telling him he would soon pass from this place of pain and suffering to eternal rest. "Yes," said he, "I have confidence in the divine mercy, and feel assured of enjoying soon the happiness of being with my God." St. Bernard, fearing it might be presumption in him to speak thus, replied: "What is it you say, my Brother? At one time you had nothing, were so miserable, could scarcely live. God loved you and placed you here, where you have wanted for nothing. Instead of thanking Him for His benefits, you presume to a place in His kingdom as if it belonged to you by inheritance." "My Father," replied the sick man, "what you say is true ; but have you not preached that the kingdom of God is not obtained by riches or nobility, but that by obedience we may gain it? I have acted upon that maxim which you have so often repeated. I have never failed to obey those who commanded me ; of this you can be informed by those in the monastery. Why, then, should I not confidently expect what you have promised on the part of God?" This answer so pleased the saint that, in speaking afterwards to his religious on obedience, he related this circumstance.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may never forget that the kingdom of God is acquired by obedience. It is by obedience one becomes a saint.

ELEVENTH DAY.

Obedience is the abridgment of perfection and of all spiritual life. It is a means the least painful, the least dangerous, the surest, and the shortest to enrich one's self in virtue, and to arrive at our desired end, which is eternal life.—*Father Alvarez.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi, on her death-bed, said that when she recalled all that had happened during the course of her life, nothing gave her so much tranquillity as the thought that she had never been guided in anything by her own will or her own judgment; that she had always followed the will or judgment of her Superiors and directors.

Prayer.

Lord, teach me to be obedient as Thou wert. How can I neglect to make use of a means so sure and efficacious for my sanctification?

TWELFTH DAY.

The demon, knowing that there is no other path which leads so quickly to the summit of perfection as that of obedience, turns many from the practice of this virtue through an appearance of good.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Bridget had a great attraction for corporal penances. She gave herself to these with, if possible, too much ardor. Her director perceived this and desired to correct it; in consequence he retrenched a part of the mortifications the saint had been accustomed to perform. The saint obeyed, but it was not without much pain lest she might become unmortified. Our Lord instructed and consoled her by causing her to hear these words: "Of two persons desiring to fast, if the one who has the liberty to do so fasts, and the other, though desiring to do so, does not, because he is under obedience and is forbidden to do so, the first receives a recompense, the second receives two—one for the desire he had to fast, and another for having obeyed."

Prayer.

O my God, what good can I do in Thy eyes if I refuse to obey those who take Thy place over me? I will see Thee in them, I will obey them as if it were Thyself, I will endeavor to do Thy will in accomplishing theirs.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

It is plainly evident that he who feels inclined to perform a good work yields to a temptation when it is contrary to obedience; because when God fills a heart with inspirations, the first is that of obedience.—*St. Teresa.*

A religious wrote to St. Francis of Sales that it was with much trouble she performed certain acts she was obliged to perform through obedience, and that she was persuaded she could do them much better in another manner. The saint replied: "To wish to live according to your own will that you may better do that of God,—what an illusion! Could an inclination so irregular be an inspiration from God? What a contradiction! Nobody ever saw one like it."

Prayer.

O Lord, I do not wish to live according to my own will. My most delicious food shall be to accomplish Thine, which is always holy, always adorable, always amiable. It is Thou Who givest me the desire to obey in all things. Give me strength to obey constantly, to obey with joy for love of Thee.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

To have entire obedience, it must be shown in three things—in the execution, in the will, and in the judgment. In the execution, by doing promptly, joyously, and punctually what the Superior orders; in the will, by willing only what the Superior wills; in the judgment, by being of the same sentiments as the Superior.—*St. Ignatius Loyola.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi possessed what is called blind obedience; she obeyed without reasoning. Whenever ordered to perform any duty, she would say: "The Superior is right, my will is hers," and obey with joy. Our Lord

inspired her to practise some great mortification; but before doing so, she consulted her Superior, who did not give her permission at first. She abstained, therefore, from practising it, despite her own will and the revelations she had had.

"I admire the little Infant of Bethlehem," said St. Francis of Sales. "He Who knew all things, Who had so great power, suffered them to do as they pleased with Him, without ever saying a word."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may obey with joy, with promptness and punctuality, whatever is commanded me. I will obey blindly, without reasoning, in everything that is not sin.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Obedience does not alone consist in doing actually what is commanded, but in being in a continual disposition to do whatsoever may be ordered upon any occasion.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Francis Xavier possessed this admirable disposition. He used to say that, although God had made use of him so efficaciously for the conversion of infidels, that one word from his Superior, St. Ignatius, would suffice to bring him to Italy, and to leave his mission from which he expected such great fruits.

Prayer.

My God, I am resolved to dispose myself to do all that those who hold Thy place command me. Make them know what is for my good; my heart is ready.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

One is truly obedient when he executes joyously and without repugnance something commanded which is contrary to his natural inclination and not to his own advantage.—*Rodriguez.*

St. John Berchmans was ordered to serve a long Mass which was said at an hour most inconvenient for him, as it happened during the time for study. He accepted the commission with joy, and served for several months without showing the least sign of discontent or without seeking to change what was assigned him by Providence.

Prayer.

My God, it is not my inclination I will follow, but Thy will. May the accomplishment of Thy will be my delight! I will obey with joy in all things to perfectly accomplish it.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

He who is truly obedient makes no distinction between one thing and another, one employment and another; he desires nothing else but to execute faithfully what is commanded.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Jerome, while visiting the monks of the desert, found one who for eight consecutive years had carried on his shoulders a large stone twice a day to a considerable distance, in obedience to his Superior, who had commanded him to do so. Having asked him if it were not hard to obey in this, he replied that he found as much pleasure in this as if he had been ordered to perform something of much importance. "These are the ones who make progress in virtue," said the saint, "because they nourish themselves with the accomplishing of the will of God. What he related to me touched me in such a manner that I commenced from that time to live like a monk."

Prayer.

My God, I desire nothing but to execute faithfully all Thou ordainest. What can I do more to please Thee than to obey for love of Thee those whom Thou placest over me?

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

The excellence of obedience does not consist in doing the will of a Superior who is sweet and good, who commands more by asking as a favor than by authority, but to be ever submissive to the yoke of one who is imperious, rigorous, severe, of an ill-humor, who never seems to be satisfied.—*St. Bernard.*

St. Jane Frances often said that she would have had much more satisfaction in obeying the least one among the Sisters, who would do nothing but contradict, and command with harshness, than in obeying the most learned or experienced in the Order. "The less of the creature the more we shall find of the Creator," added she.

St. Catharine of Bologna desired that her Superior

would always treat her harshly, and command the most difficult things. She had learned by experience, she said, that it is good to obey in things easy, but that nothing so enriches the soul with virtue in so short a time, nothing unites it more closely to God, than to obey joyfully a Superior whose manner was harsh and repugnant to our nature.

Prayer.

My God, what wilt Thou that I do? Make it known to me by those who hold Thy place. I will obey Thee in obeying them, no matter what it cost.

NINETEENTH DAY.

Unless you do violence to yourself, and unless you arrive at that point when it becomes indifferent to you whether you have one Superior or another, do not persuade yourself that you are a spiritual man and a faithful observer of your vows.—*St. John of the Cross.*

St. Francis of Assisi has said that among other graces which he had received from God one was, that he would obey with the same promptness a novice of an hour as he would an old religious of great merit.

St. Ignatius charged a lay-Brother to take care of the health of St. Francis Borgia. St. Francis obeyed the Brother as if it had been St. Ignatius himself.

Prayer.

I am ready, my God, to obey all those who have the right to command me, no matter what may be their faults or how repulsive their manner. I will obey them with love, as I would obey a saint, as I would obey Jesus Christ Himself. It is Thou I will see in them.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Remember that you have given yourself to your Superior for the love of God and to gain heaven; you do not, then, belong to yourself, but to him to whom you have given yourself. Therefore it is not permitted that you do anything of yourself or without his consent. You are not master of your will, but he is.—*St. John of the Cross.*

A saint, when dying, said to his confessor: "Thanks be to God, since the time I gave my will into your hands I have not even drawn a breath contrary to obedience."

Prayer.

My God, I renounce my will. I will continually renew this renouncement. I will do nothing of my own will, since I belong no longer to myself. I wish that every action be an act of obedience.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

When there is question of obedience, do not regard the qualities or the manner of the Superior, for fear you are not obeying God, Whose place the Superior holds. Oh, what a wound the demon makes in the heart of a religious when he begins to dwell upon the faults of his Superior!—*St. John of the Cross.*

St. John Berchmans always saw God in his Superiors, and he always felt for them the greatest veneration. He said he never had for any of them the least aversion; that he found no difficulty in honoring them, obeying them, and of being of their opinion.

Prayer.

My God, I will see only Thee in my Superiors; I will agree with their opinions, will obey promptly and joyfully.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

When the Superior orders a thing, it is not he who speaks, it is God. The Superior is but a trumpet through which the voice of God passes. This is the key of obedience; this is the reason why those who work for perfection obey in all things so promptly, making no difference between one Superior or another, obeying in the same manner the lowest in charge the same as the highest, those who are imperfect as well as the perfect. They pay no attention to the qualities nor the person of the Superior, but to God alone, Who is always and at all times the same, equally worthy of our submission, on account of His perfections and His authority, which never change.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Louis Gonzaga said he never remembered having transgressed in a single point the orders of his Superior.

St. Teresa, who sometimes had confessors who were not very enlightened nor wise, obeyed them as exactly as if they were most gifted and learned. She often said that when a confessor commanded a thing which was not a sin,

one should always obey without examining into the reasons which required the command.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may regard my Superiors as the organ through which Thou makest known Thy commands, and that I may obey, on account of Thy perfections, which are infinite, and Thy authority, which is sovereign.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

Do you know why it is that many who are a long time in religion, practising so many acts of obedience each day, do not acquire the habit of this virtue? It is because they do not obey to do the will of God. This should be the reason of our obedience.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi regarded always the person of God in her Superiors. In obeying them she desired to do the will of God; all that her Superior commanded her seemed ordered by God. From this she always experienced inexpressible satisfaction in obeying.

Prayer.

My God, I will obey to accomplish Thy will. What can I do more glorious, more delicious, more advantageous, or more necessary for my soul?

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

If it happen that you are moved to thoughts or judgments contrary to obedience, which appear to you to be just, make no account of them; reject them as quickly as true Christians reject thoughts against chastity or faith.—*St. John Climacus.*

St. John Berchmans felt a little repugnance in obeying a certain religious, but he immediately combated this natural dislike; he endeavored to banish from his mind the thought that this religious was indiscreet in exacting from him considerable time which he required to perform his duties, by reflecting upon the great advantage it was to him to obey in something contrary to his inclinations. He afterwards related to his Superior with much simplicity the victory which with God's grace he had gained over himself, and never afterwards felt the same repugnance.

Prayer.

Grant, O my God, that I may never have any repugnance to obey. If I feel any, grant that I do not show it, but may triumph over it for love of Thee.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Take care that you examine not nor judge the orders of your Superior; that is not the business of him who must submit, but of him who commands.—*St. Jerome.*

It was said of St. John Berchmans that he had not sufficient prudence to perform something which was required of him. To the one who spoke thus he said: "My brother, I ought to leave prudence to him who commands; as for me, I will hold to obedience."

Prayer.

Lord, I will no longer examine or judge the commands given me. Is it not sufficient for me to know them, since I am obliged to obey? Thou only askest of me the accomplishment of Thy will. I will wish to do it constantly to please Thee.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

To be truly obedient it is not sufficient to do what is commanded; we must do still more: obey without hesitation and without question. Hold it for certain that what is commanded is what you can do best and most perfectly, although it may not appear so to you.—*St. Philip Neri.*

Father Alvarez always obeyed with joy; he knew from experience that it was very advantageous to execute orders which do not seem to be dictated even by human prudence. He would say: "What did Jesus Christ do to cure the blind man? He took mud with which He rubbed his eyes, and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloe.' Might not this blind man have said: 'What a remedy! more proper to take away the eyesight than to restore it!' But he did not reason in this manner; he hastened to do as he had been commanded, and because he obeyed without reasoning he was cured."

Prayer.

My God, give me the grace to obey always without examining, without reasoning, without hesitating. There is nothing better, nothing more perfect than to do so for Thy love and because Thou hast commanded it.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

He who would be a good religious should regard himself as the servant of the monastery. He will not choose the burden he must carry, he will not go by the way he chooses, but will accommodate himself to every one's wishes. He walks or stops at the will of the one who conducts him; he works during the day, even at night if it be required of him. He carries the burden laid upon his back without saying, Why is it, or, It is too much or too little.—*Abbot Nesteran.*

Such was the excellent resolution this holy abbot made when he entered upon a religious life; he accordingly made rapid progress in the virtues of his state of life, and became in a short time a perfect religious. "I am here but for the purpose of obeying and serving others. I desire but that," said another religious.

It is by this path that St. Felix, the Capuchin, arrived at so high a degree of sanctity that he has a place upon our altars.

Prayer.

My God, I am here to obey, to serve others. I wish to obey all, to be the servant of all, to be agreeable in Thy eyes.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

He who has promised obedience allows himself to be governed by Divine Providence, through the Superior whose instrument he is, like one who is dead. It is a sign that one is dead not to see, not to feel, not to answer, not to complain, not to wish one thing more than another, but to permit one'sself to be carried where others will, and how they will. Examine whether your obedience is wanting in anything.—*St. Ignatius.*

The day upon which St. Magdalene of Pazzi received the religious habit she humbly prostrated herself at the feet

of her mistress, and resigning herself entirely to her will, said: "I will be henceforth in your hands like one who is dead. Do with me as you please; I will refuse you nothing. Do not, I beseech you, fear to humble and mortify me." The saint kept her promise; she was so dead to her own will that it might be said she possessed none.

Prayer.

My God, I will die to my own will; I will have none in future. My will is Thine; let me be in Thy hands as wax to which Thou canst give any form Thou pleasest.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

The perfection of a person in a community consists in an exact obedience to the rules. He who observes them most faithfully will without doubt be the most perfect.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Vincent de Paul was always the first at all the exercises of the community, because of his love for the Rule. He never failed to kneel upon entering his room, and also before leaving it, as it was a point of the Rule; although towards the end of his life he found much difficulty in so doing on account of a weakness in his limbs.

M. Joli, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Mission, replied to a Superior of one of their houses who had asked for some exceptions from the Rule: "Our Rule is contrary to what you ask; we should love it strongly. I can give you no better reason."

St. Jane Frances, appearing fatigued one day during recreation, the religious begged her to go to her room and rest. She replied, smiling: "Ah, what would we do with a Rule that would order work in the time of recreation?"

The companions of St. Louis Gonzaga attest that they never saw him fail in a single point of the Rule.

Prayer.

My God, I love the Rule, because in obeying it I accomplish Thy will and I do what is agreeable to Thee. Grant that I may be always faithful to it, for love of Thee.

THIRTIETH DAY.

The predestination of religious is attached to a love of their rule, and in performing punctually what is their duty in virtue of their vocation.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Among the papers of St. Bonaventure was found the following, written in his hand: "I have not entered religion to live as the others live, but to live as they ought to live, according to the spirit of the institute, and in a perfect observance of the Rule. This is why, upon entering religion, I was given the rules to read, not the lives of others. I accepted them voluntarily, and took them for the direction of the life I should lead. I ought, then, to observe them all, even if I saw no one else observe them."

St. Francis of Sales paid the highest praise to a General of the Carthusians who was so punctual in observing the Rule that not even the newest novice could be more exact.

St. John Berchmans, being on his death-bed, asked for a book of the rules which he had so faithfully observed. When it was given to him, he clasped it lovingly and said: "Holding this book, I die with confidence and joy."

Prayer.

Lord, here I am, to do Thy will. What wilt Thou of me? My heart is ready. Command; Thou wilt be obeyed. With Thy grace nothing will seem difficult, all will be light.

JULY.

Simplicity.

"*Be simple as doves*,"—ST. MATT. x. 16.

FIRST DAY.

Those who make profession of following the maxims of Jesus Christ should greatly esteem simplicity. Although, in the judgment of the wise ones of the world, there is nothing more contemptible than simplicity, it is, nevertheless, a very amiable virtue, because it directly conducts to the kingdom of God, and likewise gains for us the affections of men.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Francis of Sales esteemed and loved simplicity. "I do not know what the virtue of prudence has done to me; it is hard for me to love it. If I love it, it is through necessity, because it is the light which directs us here below; but the beauty of simplicity ravishes me. It is true, the Gospel recommends the simplicity of the dove and the prudence of the serpent, but I would give a hundred serpents for one dove. I know both are useful when united; it seems to me one should do as is done in medicinal compositions: put in little of the viper and much of other salutary drugs."

Prayer.

My God, give me simplicity, and never permit me to wound this amiable virtue.

SECOND DAY.

Those who possess the virtue of simplicity make themselves loved even by those who are deceitful.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

The simplicity of St. Phocas the Martyr was most admirable. He cultivated a little garden, not so much for his own use as to be able to give vegetables and fruit to travel-

lers and pilgrims. He received with ravishing charity all who came to ask his hospitality. He was denounced to the president of the province as the friend and refuge of Christians. The president, who was a pagan, was enraged. He secretly sent some soldiers into Thrace with orders to find the saint and put him to death. They departed. One night they arrived at the house of Phocas. Not suspecting it was the house of the one they were seeking, they asked their supper and bed in a tone usual with soldiers. He assured them he had much pleasure in receiving them, and treated them to his best. His affable manners enchanted them. Charmed with his simplicity and frankness, they told him the object of their journey. "Do you know," said they, "a certain Phocas among the Christians, who is their protector, and who gives them refuge? We are here, by order of the prefect of the empire, to find him and put him to death." "I know him well," replied the saint. "Go to your rest tranquilly, without seeking further. To-morrow morning I will bring him to you; he will not escape you." Depending upon him, they retired to rest, while he passed the night in prayer. At the break of day he sought his guests, who were to become his assassins, bestowing upon them every mark of cordiality. The soldiers reminded him of his promise. "Fear not that I will fail in my promise; I will find him for you." "Let us go, then," replied the soldiers. "It is not necessary to leave the house," said he. "He is here; it is he who speaks to you. Yes, I am the Phocas you seek. Do with me as you please." Their astonishment cannot be expressed, nor their confusion, on hearing these words; they wished he had fled during the night. Neither dared to put a hand upon their benefactor; they wished to leave him his life, and to say to the prefect they had sought for him but could not find him. "No," said the saint, "one must never lie. You are to put me to death; execute the orders you have received. I do not fear death." Finally he persuaded them. He placed his head in a position to be decapitated, and it was done.

Prayer.

Lord, he who walks with simplicity walks with confidence. Thou lovest those who are simple, Thou fillest them with Thy graces.

THIRD DAY.

Simplicity is nothing else but a pure and simple act of charity, whose only end is the love of God. Our soul is truly simple when we have only this end in all we do.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

The love of God was the only end St. Magdalene of Pazzi proposed in all she did. She expressed herself in the following words: "If by saying one word, no matter how indifferent, I might become a seraph, and that word had any other object than the love of God, I would not say it."

"I do not serve God," said another saint, "for the kingdom of God, but on account of His goodness and charity. I serve Him because Jesus Christ has suffered for me, and because, being God, He deserves to be served."

Prayer.

My God, I desire only to love and to please Thee. I will seek only this. It is not to be happy I desire heaven, it is to love Thee perfectly. Oh, how touching is Thy love and goodness for me!

FOURTH DAY.

The office of simplicity is to make us go straight to God, without listening to human respect, without consulting our own interest; to make us speak frankly and from our heart; to make us act simply, without any mingling of hypocrisy or artifice; finally, to keep us far from duplicity or deceit.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint thought only of God in all his actions, and could not suffer that any one would seek anything out of Him. One of the priests of his congregation having been publicly accused of having performed an action through human respect, he reproved him severely, saying it would

be better for him to be tied hands and feet and be thrown into the fire than to act with a view to please men. To one of his missionaries he said : " O God, what kind of thoughts are these ? Where is the simplicity of a missionary, who should always go direct to God ? Do you not know that duplicity does not please God, and that to be truly simple we should never see aught but Him ?" He was so far removed from all evasion or subterfuge that, when he spoke, one never feared to be deceived.

Prayer.

My God, I will seek only Thee in all things ; Thou alone wilt suffice. Happy is he who desires only Thee, who possesses only Thee !

FIFTH DAY.

God loves the simple; He converses willingly with them, He communicates to them the knowledge of His truths, because He disposes of that to whom He pleases. It is not thus He deals with those who are not simple-minded.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Experience confirms this truth, said St. Vincent, because we often see that the spirit of religion is not ordinarily found among the wise and prudent of this world, but among the poor and simple, whom God enriches with a lively and practical faith, which enables them to believe and relish the words of eternal life.

St. Ambrose, in the funeral oration which he made over his brother St. Satyre, remarked, among his other virtues, the simplicity of a child ; which, said he, shone in him as clearly as if one looked in a mirror, and which must have made him very dear to God, Who, being by His nature very simple, necessarily loves those who possess this virtue.

Prayer.

My God, I desire simplicity, because Thou lovest souls who are simple; Thou makest Thyself known to them.

and the more one is enlightened on Thy perfections and Thy love, the more one loves Thee.

SIXTH DAY.

True simplicity is like that of children, who think, speak, and act openly, without malice. They believe all that is told them; they have no care over themselves; they do not even think for themselves, especially when with their parents: they keep close to them, hoping all from them, knowing that they are loved.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

“You have preached badly, you could not preach worse,” said a person in authority to a worthy priest who had very much simplicity. “I thank you,” said he. “Alas! I had the vanity to think I had not spoken so badly.”

“When I have committed a sin,” said a servant of God, “what touches me most is the thought that in sinning I have had the misfortune to offend Him Who is the tenderest of fathers. I hasten to Him and say: ‘O my Father, I have sinned.’ *Pater, peccavi.* I imagine I am like a little child ready to be chastised by his father for having disobeyed him, but who appeases his anger, so that the rod falls from the father’s hand when the child protests he is sorry for his fault and will not commit it again.”

It is related of St. Francis of Sales that, when a child, he used to say: “God and my mother love me well.” Let us say with simplicity: “God, Who is my father, the Blessed Virgin, who is my mother, love me well.” Or with St. Ambrose: “What a good master have we not in God!”

Prayer.

My God, Thou art my father, I am Thy child. Thou treatest me as the best of mothers treats her little child. I will go to Thee as a little child to his mother, whom he loves and by whom he is tenderly loved.

SEVENTH DAY.

When a soul that is simple wishes to say or do something, it is content to consider if it be expedient to do so, without taking time to consider what others may think or say. After having decided upon what to do, she thinks no more of it. If thoughts of what others may think come to mind, she makes no account of them, because she seeks only to please God, not creatures, and this is all that the love of God requires.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This holy bishop at one time made a visit to the Carthusians. The General, who was a man eminent in piety and science, received him with great affability. Having entertained him for a length of time discoursing on holy things, he begged to be excused, saying that if he left him, it was because he was obliged to attend the matins, as it was the feast of a saint of the Order. As this excellent religious was going to his cell he met the purveyor, who represented to him that he thought he had done wrong to leave the holy bishop, as there was no one else capable of entertaining him. "We have not every day in our solitude so illustrious a prelate, while you are at liberty every day to assist at matins," said he. "I think you are right," said the General. Returning immediately to the saint, he related with great simplicity what had been said to him, making excuses for the fault he had committed without thinking, as he expressed it. The saint was in admiration at so great a simplicity, more struck, he said, than if he had witnessed a miracle.

Prayer.

Before doing any action, I will think of the consequence, lest I displease Thee, O my God. In doing this I will examine no more whether men oppose or blame. It is Thee alone I will seek, and will seek forever more.

EIGHTH DAY.

Let your eye be simple. When you do what God commands, fear not to displease men; fear only to displease the majesty of God.—*St. Teresa.*

This saint said she applied herself entirely to act in a manner that would not displease Him Whose eyes were constantly fixed upon her.

“Since I have consecrated myself to the service of God I have done nothing privately that I would not do in public, because in my actions I am penetrated with the presence of God, which I fear more than men,” said St. Vincent de Paul.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may never act without a pure intention; penetrate me in such a manner with Thy presence and Thy perfections that I may do nothing for men, all for Thee, O my God, all to please Thee, in accomplishing with joy and love Thy holy will.

NINTH DAY.

When a man has done all that God requires of him towards the success of a thing, if he has simplicity, he is tranquil, whether it is a success or not.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Marie-Henri Boudon, who often repeated these words, “God alone, always God alone,” in order that he might do nothing but for God, was calumniated and horribly persecuted. But he did not lose his peace of soul. Far from being afflicted or complaining, he blessed God and thanked Him. “God wishes to try me or to chastise me in His mercy,” said he. “Should I not consider myself happy to be treated thus by Him?”

Prayer.

How, O my God, is it that my heart, which is so small, does not content itself with Thee alone, Who art infinite

good, Who art all good? Thee alone, my God, Thee alone—I wish for Thee alone. Give Thyself to me, and do with me as Thou wilt. I will obey Thee and thank Thee for all.

TENTH DAY.

If it happens that you say or do something which is not well received by all, you should not for this reason reflect much upon it, because it is beyond a doubt that it is self-love which makes us seek to be approved in what we say or do. Simplicity abandons to Providence the success of actions done for Him.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This holy prelate never desired to learn whether he was blamed or praised for that which he thought it his duty to do or to say. Learning one day that certain persons disapproved of one of his actions, he replied, without seeming at all troubled: "I ought not to be surprised at what you tell me, since the works of Jesus Christ were not approved by all; even to-day there are many who find fault with them."

Prayer.

My God, do not permit me to listen to self-love, which desires to be praised in all it does and says. I am jealous only of Thy approbation, as I desire to please Thee alone. I offer Thee all my actions; I will perform them for love of Thee, and then abandon them to Thy providence.

ELEVENTH DAY.

Do not philosophize over your afflictions and your contradictions, but receive them with sweetness and with patience; it suffices for you to know that they come from the hand of God.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Our Lord caused a person who was uneasy regarding something she had to suffer to hear these words: "Thou sayest thou confidest in Me, and yet thou givest thyself anxiety!"

St. Vincent de Paul received all from the hands of God, without discoursing on the designs of God upon him, only adoring them with respect. He was likewise never seen to

show inquietude nor ill-humor, nor heard to complain even when overburdened with work and suffering most.

Afflictions and contradictions were, according to the judgment of St. Teresa, presents from a heavenly Father, which she received with much gratitude.

Prayer.

My God, I am ready for all kinds of contradictions, persecutions, and afflictions. I will not be anxious, I will not complain; I will receive them from Thy paternal hand, knowing Thou wilt approve or chastise in Thy mercy.

TWELFTH DAY.

Those continual reflections one makes on one's self and one's actions are opposed to simplicity and serve only to cause us to lose much time. By watching too closely to see if we do well, it happens often that we do the thing itself badly. We are like the silk-worm which in making threads builds herself a prison.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint wrote as follows to a religious who reflected too much upon the movements of her self-love: "Do not let their importunity trouble you; be not alarmed at their multitude. Walk simply. God has left you these evil thoughts only that they may serve to unite you to Him. Do not desire to be perfect, but go on with a good heart, repose entirely upon the holy and loving confidence you should have in the sweetness of a Celestial Providence."

Prayer.

O my God, how many evil thoughts are there not in me! But I will not be discouraged. Assist me with Thy grace, that I may use it to unite me to Thee. I will have the confidence of a child for the best of fathers.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

Continual reflection upon our faults is not pleasing in the eyes of God; it serves but to satisfy our miserable self-love. Walk simply.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A young religious who desired to become perfect was constantly troubled with sentiments of fear and discouragement.

ment, because he occupied himself too much with his faults. Wishing to console himself, he opened his heart to a very virtuous religious who had had much experience. He was content to counsel him to follow the advice of the Holy Ghost, Who says : " My son, keep thy soul in meekness, do in meekness all thy works." *Fili in mansuetudine serva animam tuam, in mansuetudine perfice opera tua.* He followed this advice, tasted how sweet is the Lord, and made rapid progress in perfection.

Prayer.

My God, I will, notwithstanding so many faults that are in me, preserve my soul in peace, perform in meekness all my actions, in order to taste how sweet Thou art, and to grow in Thy love continually.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

A simple soul has not two measures. When we have to deliberate upon affairs which regard ourselves, and upon those which regard our neighbor, it is necessary to decide as if our affairs were those of our neighbor, and those of our neighbor our own.—*St. Ignatius Loyola.*

A holy abbot having been consulted by one who doubted whether he could say or do certain things in a matter concerning another person, he replied : " Examine what would be the sentiments of your heart if they said or did thus with you, and in case you would yourself be displeased, remember to use moderation and charity to others."

St. Vincent de Paul was accustomed to say : " Let us have our eye as attentive to the interests of our neighbor as to our own." This saint had some relatives who wrote to him to give them his assistance in a criminal process with which they were threatened. He refused to take any part in the affair, through his zeal for justice. Some of his friends wishing to interest themselves in their favor before the judge, he begged them to inform themselves before all of the innocence of the accused, lest they might expose themselves to violate the laws of justice.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may be as interested for my neighbor as for myself. I love my neighbor as myself, for love of Thee, because Thou commandest it, and because I see in him Thy child whom Thou hast created and redeemed by the blood of my Saviour.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

He who serves God in simplicity of heart is indifferent, no matter what God may exact of him. The inquietude which is felt if we cannot give ourselves to certain exercises of piety, when obedience calls us to other duties, comes from a self-love very subtle, and shows that we seek rather to satisfy ourselves than to please God.—*St. Teresa.*

Father Alvarez, finding himself overwhelmed with occupations, complained lovingly to God that he had not time to entertain himself alone with Him. Then the voice of God spoke to him interiorly, saying: "Let it suffice that I make use of you, though you are not directly occupied with me." This answer was a source of consolation to him.

The reason why St. Vincent de Paul, who was always much occupied, never complained that he could not give more time to exercises of piety, and was never distracted by the multiplicity of affairs, was because in all that he did he sought to please God alone.

Prayer.

My God, I am indifferent to everything, no matter what Thou mayest ask of me. I will never seek to please myself, but only to please Thee.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

What benefit would it be for us if God had planted in our hearts a holy aversion for all that nature seeks with such ardor? or if every one accommodated themselves to us, or if everything succeeded with us? Let us pray God that He teach us to place in Him all our happiness, to love all that He loves, and only find agreeable that which pleases Him.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

A young anchorite asked of his master why charity was not as perfect in our day as it formerly was. This was the answer: "Christians in early times looked up to heaven, and elevated their hearts; but now all incline towards the earth, seeking only their own advantage."

Prayer.

My God, give me a holy aversion for all that nature so ardently seeks. Grant that I may put my hopes in Thee, that I love what Thou lovest, and that what pleases me be agreeable to Thee.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Those who are perfect and walk with simplicity do nothing but what is agreeable to God, because they seek in all things to please Him; such is the end of all their occupations and of all their actions. To please God is their only ambition, hence the great merit they acquire in performing the least action.—*Rodriguez.*

"To what do you apply yourself most?" asked some one of a great servant of God. He replied: "To be able to say with Jesus Christ, 'I do always that which is agreeable to my Father.'"

It is related of the celebrated Father Rileyra that during all his life he was as exact in keeping every point of the Rule as he had been in the time of his novitiate; he wished only to please God. It was in this path that St. Louis Gonzaga, St. John Berchmans, St. Magdalene of Pazzi, and so many others have been sanctified.

Prayer.

Lord, let the end of all my actions be to please Thee. The only aim of my life is, after the example of my Saviour, to do what is agreeable to Thee.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

God makes known His will to those who ask Him in simplicity. Let him who has a state of life to choose, or who would desire to know what he should do for the sanctification of his soul, renounce, first, all natural inclination, and place himself generously in the hands of God, firmly resolved to obey Him. Let him then weigh the pro and con, meditating on some truths of Scripture, drawing the consequences which are the result, and applying them to the end for which God has created us. If he still doubts what part he should take, let him suppose himself on his death-bed, or at the last judgment, and then determine to do what he would wish then to have done.—*St. Ignatius Loyola.*

St. Vincent de Paul having been consulted by an advocate whether it would be well for him to expatriate himself in order to take a position away from France, which would bring him much distinction, saying he was determined to follow the saint's advice, St. Vincent asked for time to recommend the matter to God. The next day he told him: "During Mass I offered to God your petition, and begged of Our Lord, after the consecration, to enlighten me. I afterwards considered what I would counsel you if it was the moment of my death. It seemed to me that if I were to die at that instant, I would be satisfied if I had persuaded you from going. This, then, is my advice."

A poor beggar, badly clothed, begged alms of a pious lady. She said to her servant: "Give him a shirt." The servant gave the worst he could find. "Give him a better one," said the lady. "What confusion would I not feel on the day of judgment, if Jesus Christ were to show to the whole world the garment you would give!"

Prayer.

My God, I will do nothing that Thou forbiddest. I will do all that Thou requirest, all that Thou desirest of me. I

will often say to myself, Would you do this if you were soon to appear before the tribunal of God?

NINETEENTH DAY.

There is a kind of simplicity which makes one close the eyes to all sentiments of nature and of human reason, to fix them always upon the maxims of faith, and to make them constantly the rule of our actions. In all our words, actions, thoughts, and affairs, in every place and at every time, to consult faith, to do nothing but from its dictation—this is true simplicity.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

“Perform all your actions before your tomb,” said a servant of God. St. Bernard followed this salutary custom. Before acting he asked himself this question: “If I should die in a few moments, would I perform the action I am about to do?”

St. Louis Gonzaga imagined himself upon the brink of eternity, and reflected and examined if what he was about to do would tend to make that eternity happy.

Another, who would lead a holy life, had written this sentence where he might see it continually: “Before performing an action, think of what must follow.”

Another considered without ceasing the present life as a journey which a criminal makes who, hearing his sentence read, proceeds from the prison to the place of execution.

Prayer.

My God grant that I may never lose sight of the holy maxims of faith; that I may consult it without ceasing, and that it be the rule of my conduct.

TWENTIETH DAY.

“Prudence is necessary in order to be circumspect in our actions, and to know how to accommodate ourselves to the disposition of others; it unites itself easily with simplicity.”—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint, who possessed the virtue of simplicity in so high a degree, regulated his actions in such a manner by

prudence and charity to his neighbor that he succeeded in all he undertook. He was looked upon as the wisest man of his time, so much so that he was consulted as an oracle, and every one made it a law to follow his counsels.

Prayer.

Lord, give me the prudence of the serpent and the simplicity of the dove. Let Thy divine wisdom make me circumspect, and grant that in my words and actions there be no duplicity.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Christian prudence consists in judging, speaking, acting as the Eternal Wisdom when robed in our mortal nature judged, spoke, and acted, and in governing one's self in every circumstance according to the maxims of faith, not according to the false sentiments of the world, or according to the weak light of its understanding.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Francis of Sales was the sworn enemy of human prudence. "If I came again into the world," said he, "with the same sentiments I now possess, nothing could make me doubt this truth, that the wisdom of the flesh and of the children of the world is a chimera, a great folly."

St. Vincent de Paul consulted only Christian prudence; he never undertook anything of importance, gave no answer, gave no counsel before fixing his eyes upon Jesus Christ, so that he might find in His conduct and maxims help to guide him in his determination.

Prayer.

My God, I will no longer regulate my conduct by the false maxims of the world, nor by the light of its understanding. O Jesus, Who art eternal wisdom, I will judge of things as Thou didst judge, speak the same language, and act for the same end.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

Let us beware of human sentiments, lest, under the pretext of zeal and the glory of God, they make us form plans and undertake things for the glory of God which do not come from God and are an obstacle to His blessing falling upon us. These sentiments are very much opposed to Christian simplicity.—*St. Vincent de Paul*.

The Superior of a House of the Mission having written to the saint that he thought it advisable to give missions at first on the estates of persons of considerable importance, thinking by so doing to gain their good-will, the saint replied: "Your design appears to me human, and contrary to Christian simplicity. God preserve us from doing anything with so base a motive! Divine Goodness never asks us to do good to be esteemed, but to refer all our actions to Him alone."

He wished his missionaries and ecclesiastics to preach solidly but with simplicity. "To enter into the sentiments of our divine Saviour," said he, "we should not seek our own glory, but that of our heavenly Father. By speaking with the intention of imitating Him, He speaks by our mouth, and we serve as the instruments of His mercy, which penetrates the most hardened hearts and converts the most rebellious spirits."

Prayer.

My divine Saviour, bless the resolution which I take to form no project, undertake no work without fixing my eyes upon Thee, imploring Thy assistance, and consulting Thy maxims and examples.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

We love ourselves too much, we act with too much human prudence, consulting too rarely our faith. How great is our folly! How great a wrong we do ourselves in thus acting! It is not thus that the saints have conducted themselves.—*St. Teresa*.

St. Francis Xavier, upon going to India, was given the title of Apostolic Legate; nevertheless, during the voyage,

while on the vessel, he would not permit any one to wash his linen, considering it no abasement to do it himself. Some one remarked to him that it was degrading to his dignity. He replied: "There is but one thing which is vile and unworthy of a Christian: it is sin."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may never forget this sentence: There is nothing vile but sin.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

When you have to deal with persons who have no simplicity, the best means to win them to God is to treat them with much frankness and simplicity, because this is the spirit of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He who is destined to glorify Our Saviour must act with this spirit.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

The saint, upon giving a charge to one of his priests, said to him: "You are going to a country where it is said the people are noted for artifice and dissimulation. If they are such, the best means to gain them to God will be to act with great simplicity. The maxims of the Gospel are entirely opposed to those of the world; therefore, going to them in the service of God, you should act according to the spirit of the Son of God, which is full of uprightness and sincerity." Some time after establishing in this province a house of the congregation, he placed over it a Superior whose character shone with frankness and candor. He loved with much tenderness those who possessed in a high degree the virtue of simplicity.

Prayer.

O my divine Saviour, fill me with Thy spirit; grant that I may never speak or act contrary to it.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Simple souls fly all by-ways which may lead them from God. May God preserve us from flattering, praising, or doing anything to attract the notice or protection of any one! These motives are too unworthy and too far from the spirit of Jesus Christ and of His love, which should be the principle of all we do. These should be our maxims: to do all for the love of God, and not to desire the esteem of men; to work for their salvation, without troubling ourselves with what they may say.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

“I seek but the kingdom of God; I desire only to write my name in the book of the elect. To please God, to please but Him, this is my only ambition,” said a servant of God.

It was with inexpressible admiration that the people of Antioch listened to the sermons of St. John Chrysostom. Interrupted often by the acclamations and applause of the people, which for him, on account of his humility, was very painful, he said to them: “Of what use is all your applauding? I do not need either your applause or this tumult. I do not seek to please you, but to convert you. The only thing I desire is that, after listening peacefully and understanding these truths, you will faithfully practise them. This is all the applause I expect of you; it is the only praise I desire.”

Prayer.

My God, I will do all for Thy love, without desiring the esteem of men. It matters little if they are pleased. If I have the happiness to please Thee, I will be content; I have only this ambition.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

If it happen that you sometimes fail in a point, what you should then do is to acknowledge with sincerity your fault; and if you are asked to do something that you are ignorant of, you must with simplicity say so. Leave deceit to the wise of this world.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint practised what he preached to others. Whenever he forgot to do what he had promised, he acknowledged

with frankness that he had forgotten. Whenever he was asked to interest himself for any person, he refused if the affair did not seem just to him, giving the reason for his refusal. Different persons who thought they were indebted to him for certain favors thanked him for the service they thought he had rendered them, but he undeceived them. The enemy of untruth and dissimulation, he was accustomed to say that he always congratulated himself upon telling things as they were.

Prayer.

My God, give me a great horror of lies and dissimulation. Let me die rather than lie.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

It is the nature of the dove to do all for his mate. When she is hatching, she leaves to him the care of all that she needs. O delicious law! to do nothing but for God, and to please Him, and to repose entirely in Him!—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Vincent de Paul was continually working for the glory of God, and providing for the needs of his neighbor for the glory of God, without thinking of his own interests or those of his congregation, whose success he had placed entirely in the hands of God.

St. Jane Frances, according to St. Francis of Sales, might be compared to those doves that bathe and regard themselves in the brooks, beautifying themselves not so much to be beautiful, as to please their mates which they love. She sought not to purify herself for the sake of being pure and adorned with virtue; she did all to please Our Saviour, Whom she loved. She wished to please Him to so great an extent that, if ugliness were as agreeable to the eyes of her divine Spouse as beauty, she would not have loved beauty more than ugliness.

Prayer.

My God, I will do all for Thee, to please Thee, and to rest in Thee. I wish to please Thee because I love Thee.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

There is a certain simplicity of heart in which consists the perfection of all perfection. It is when our soul, regarding God alone, applies itself simply and with much fidelity to accomplish His rules, and to follow the means of sanctification He has prescribed, without desiring or undertaking any other.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Jane Frances excellently practised this kind of simplicity. She earnestly desired to see it implanted and take root in the hearts of her daughters. One of her daughters asked her in a letter the best means to perfection. The saint replied: "The best means I can give you is to apply yourself to observe very faithfully your rule, for the love of God, and to execute exactly, through the same spirit, all that you will be commanded at different times."

"Being on the eve of appearing before God, to render an account of my works, that which consoles me most is that I have been exact to observe my rule, with a view to please Him," said a dying religious whom the Church honors as a saint.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may become perfect in all things, particularly in simplicity, in charity. I would always please Thee by accomplishing Thy holy will.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

Oh, how one should love the generous resolution of desiring to imitate the hidden and common life of Our Saviour Jesus Christ! This thought comes from God, since it is so far removed from the flesh and the senses.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

A person who aimed at perfection asked a holy priest, who was very enlightened, the means to arrive there. He said: "Live continually in union with Jesus Christ, without doing anything extraordinary exteriorly." She followed his counsel and made rapid progress in the paths of God. She proposed Jesus Christ as her model in all she did. When

she awoke, she represented to herself Our Saviour offering Himself to His Father, and offered herself with Him. In her prayers, she imagined Our Saviour praying with an infinite fervor; she endeavored to enter into His dispositions. At work, she thought of Our Saviour giving Himself to the great work of our salvation. If she was ordered to do anything, she hastened to obey, thinking of Jesus submissive to Mary and Joseph. In assisting at Mass, she sacrificed herself in spirit with Our Saviour. In her conversations, she thought of Jesus Christ, Whose conversation was so mild and so edifying. When she suffered, she recollected that Jesus was a Man of sorrows. On taking her rest, she whispered these words: "O my Father, into Thy hands I place my soul."

Prayer.

My divine Saviour, give me a great desire to imitate Thy hidden and common life. Grant that I may live continually in union with Thee. I will take Thee for a model in all I do.

THIRTIETH DAY.

The virtue of simplicity, which all love in others, is very useful to those who are destined to instruct their neighbor. They should continually labor to divest themselves of self, and to clothe themselves in Jesus Christ. If they are not animated with the spirit of Jesus Christ, what can they do? They will teach rather the semblance of virtue than the substance.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint endeavored constantly to divest himself of self, and to invest himself with Jesus Christ. He sought to conform himself to Him, not only in his exterior, in his manner, but still more in all his interior dispositions, in his desires, his maxims, and his intentions. He desired nothing but what Jesus Christ desired; that is, that God be known, loved, and glorified, and that His holy will be perfectly accomplished in him.

A holy priest said often to himself, in order to animate himself to imitate Our Saviour: "I ought to be another Jesus Christ; am I another Jesus Christ?"

Prayer.

My adorable Saviour, teach me not to belong to myself, but to Thee. Grant that I be animated by Thy spirit. I desire to be like Thee in disposition, desires, intentions.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

God is a being very simple. This is why, if we desire to make ourselves, as far as it is possible, like to Him, we should endeavor to be by virtue what God is by nature; that is, to have a heart simple, a mind simple, an intention simple, a manner simple, a language simple; to walk honestly, without artifice, with an exterior conformable to our interior, regarding God alone in all our actions, Whom alone we should desire to please.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

A worthy priest, wishing to profit by this advice of St. Vincent de Paul, wrote the following resolution, which he often read :

In order to possess a simple heart, I will examine several times during the day whether there is any disorderly affection in my heart; I will renounce the seven capital sins and say to my God, Thou art the God of my heart, Thou art my God and my All.

In order to have simplicity of heart, I will never condemn any one, being edified at all the good I see, excusing the intention of those who do ill.

In order to have a simple intention, I will propose in the beginning of my actions a supernatural motive.

I will avoid in my manner of speaking, in my walk, my actions, my exterior, all that is opposed to simplicity and modesty.

Prayer.

My God, grant that all in me be simple — my heart, my mind, my manner, my language. In all my actions I will regard only Thee, I will desire only to please Thee.

AUGUST.

The Sanctification of Our Actions.

"He hath done all things well."—ST. MATT. vii. 37.

FIRST DAY.

We are what our works are. According as our works are good or bad, we are good or bad ; for we are the trees, and our works the fruit. It is by the fruit one judges of the quality of the tree.—*St. Augustin.*

A servant of God who was near his last end exclaimed : "I know now perfectly what is most essential towards becoming holy and saving our souls. It is to do all our actions well for the love of God."

St. Bonaventure animated himself as well as others to give themselves to all kinds of good works by often repeating this maxim : "We lose as much glory in an hour passed in idleness as we would have gained in an hour spent in good works."

In a little book belonging to St. Louis Gonzaga was found this resolution written by his own hand, which he had taken and which he kept : "I will place all my care in doing my actions well, that they may bring me to God."

Prayer.

My God, I will neglect nothing to do as perfectly as possible all my actions. I wish that there be none which is not agreeable to Thee, and desire them to merit heaven for me.

SECOND DAY.

It does not suffice to do good things. We must do more; we must do them well, after the example of Jesus Christ, of Whom it is written: *He hath done all things well.* Let us, then, study to perform all our actions in the spirit of Jesus Christ; that is, in the manner He performed His actions, proposing to ourselves the same end; otherwise, every work, good perhaps in itself, will bring upon us punishment rather than rewards.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. John Berchmans performed all his actions in the manner, time, and place, and for the end he should do them, that it might be said of each one of his actions, Behold an action perfectly done!

St. Ignatius perceiving that a Brother of his society acted with much negligence, asked him for whom he performed his actions. The Brother replied that he performed them for God. "If you performed them for man, the evil would not be so great; but what disorder to act in the manner you do, working for so great a Master as God!"

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may do all things well; that I may do them in the spirit of my Saviour, for the same end. Grant me the grace to perform them with exactitude and fervor.

THIRD DAY.

Many persuade themselves that they have no true sorrow for their sins if they do not practise corporal austerities. Let us learn, nevertheless, that he does a good penance who studies to please God. It is a very perfect thing and of great merit.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

We do not read that St. Francis of Sales and other great saints continually afflicted their bodies by rude penances. They arrived at sanctity by devoting themselves to the sanctification of all their actions; they did all they believed Our Lord asked of them in the most perfect manner possible.

St. John Berchmans, that servant of God who labored

continually to become a saint by performing in the most perfect manner possible his ordinary actions, had taken for his motto this sentence, which he studied frequently: *Pœnitentia maxima vita communis*, "My greatest penance is the ordinary life."

Prayer.

Thou exactest, O my God, that I do penance for so many sins of which I have been guilty. The penance to which I will devote myself will be to perform well all my actions, with the intention of pleasing Thee. An ordinary life which I will not lead in an ordinary manner—such shall be my penance.

FOURTH DAY.

If men only knew in what manner Our Lord will recompense in the other world the good we do here, our understanding, our memory, and our will would be occupied only with good works, no matter what it might cost to perform them.—*St. Catharine of Genoa.*

A person who had made great sacrifices for God soon after experienced inexpressible consolations. She exclaimed: "If the Lord is so sweet to mortals who do a little for His love, what must be the happiness of the saints in paradise!"

St. Francis of Assisi, during a time of suffering, said: "The good that I desire and that I hope for with confidence is so great that torments are for me a delight."

"The saints who are in heaven would willingly consent, if it were possible for them, to suffer horribly until the day of judgment, to be able to procure for themselves the recompense of one *Hail Mary* recited with devotion," said one of them.

Prayer.

My God, I will avoid what is evil, that is, sin. I will do all the good Thou requirest, that Thou desirest of me, and I will do it well. I will do what I know to be most perfect, in Thy love, with love, and for love.

FIFTH DAY.

Study not to appear singular, but to be truly so. We become so by leading a common life, but not in a common manner. One must do what is required very exactly, that is, in the place, manner, and the time prescribed. We must do for God common things in the most perfect manner. Not to be singular in the exterior, to be so interiorly, this is a great virtue, a treasure.—*St. Bernard.*

It was a beautiful eulogy on this saint when it was said of him that he was not ordinary in ordinary actions. *Erat in ordinariis, non ordinarius.* Grace was the principle of his actions, charity the motive; he performed them in the presence of God, animated with great fervor.

There could be no one more punctual than St. Francis of Sales, not only in public, on the altar, or in the choir, where he observed with most perfect fidelity the least ceremonies, but particularly when he recited the divine office, or acquitted himself of his other duties.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I be agreeable to Thee in all my actions. I will do none unless grace be the principle and charity the motive. I will do all in Thy presence, practising interior mortification and zeal for souls.

SIXTH DAY.

Do not be of those who place their perfection in undertaking many things, but of those whose devotion consists in doing well the little they do. It is much better to do little and do it well than to do many things and do them illy. Yes, little and good, little and good, this is best. Then let us study not to multiply our exercises, but to do more perfectly those we already perform.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A great director repeated this maxim unceasingly: Short prayers said with devotion are more agreeable to God, and more useful to him who says them, than long prayers said without devotion and with negligence. It is

a good thing in itself to pray a long time, but we must pray devoutly all the time we pray.

A saint whose parents gave her the lowest offices in the house to perform, and gave her no leisure to perform any exercises of piety, was nevertheless very agreeable to God, because she walked in His holy presence and dwelt in a manner in His heart, ceasing not to make holy aspirations.

Prayer.

Thou art my Saviour and my God. How guilty will I not be if, serving so good and so great a Master, I do not always act for Thee, or if I perform with negligence the actions I do for Thee.

SEVENTH DAY.

Our Lord does not measure our perfection by the number and greatness of the works we do, but by the manner in which we do them; and this manner is the love with which and by which we perform them. Actions are more perfect according as the love with which they are performed is more pure and more perfect.—*St. John of the Cross.*

“Love God and do that which love will tell you,” *Ama et fac quod vis*, said St. Augustin.

St. Francis Borgia did not always preach according to the liking of his audience, neither in the subjects he treated nor the manner of addressing them. Nevertheless, he never preached without much fruit, because it was purely for God that he announced the divine word.

A person who desired to perform all her actions for the love of God began them by making upon herself the sign of the cross, saying: *In the name and for the love of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Yes, my God, such is my intention.*

Prayer.

My God, I offer Thee the action that I do. I desire to do it, as well as all the other actions of my life, for love,

pure love. Grant that this may be the motive which animates every one in all his actions.

EIGHTH DAY.

To do well our actions, we must perform them with a very pure intention and a very decided and joyous will to please God alone. This is the body, the soul of our actions; it is this that gives them their value, which makes them easy and agreeable.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi did not cease to recommend to the novices in her charge to offer to God even their most indifferent actions; and in order that they might be faithful, from time to time she asked them this question: "For what end do you perform this action?" When the one she interrogated replied that she did it without a supernatural intention, she would say: "Do you not see that by acting thus you lose the merit? God is not honored nor satisfied with such actions."

The abbot Pampon, perceiving a courtier superbly attired, could not restrain a sigh nor refrain from shedding tears. He was asked the reason. He replied: "Unfortunate that I am! it would be well for me did I desire with such ardor to please God as this creature desires to please men."

Prayer.

O my God, what folly not to do all our actions in a manner that will render them meritorious for us! The means is to perform them with much love and purely for love of God.

NINTH DAY.

It is upon our actions, but particularly our ordinary actions, that our perfection depends, because they are the most numerous. If we perform them perfectly we will be perfect. Why is it that of two religious who perform the same things, one is an excellent religious, the other is not? It is because one does ordinary things perfectly, the other imperfectly and negligently.—*Rodriguez.*

When St. Gertrude was young she performed only the same duties as her companions; she even did less, because,

on account of her health, she was not permitted to keep every point of the rule to which the others were bound. But what made her more agreeable in the eyes of God was that she did all with more perfection.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, I desire to do perfectly all that I do. Let it be Thou who thinketh in me, speaketh in me. I unite all my works to Thine; give me a part in Thy merits.

TENTH DAY.

Among ordinary actions, those to which we should give most attention are the spiritual. These actions regard God more directly, and conduct more efficaciously to perfection. If we do otherwise, we bring upon ourselves the threatened malediction of the Holy Ghost against those who do the work of God negligently.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Although this saint was in charge of many different affairs, he arranged his time in such a manner as never to fail in his exercises of piety. He performed them with great devotion and fervor, because he did them in the presence of God, and for love of Him,—those actions which might in themselves be capable of distracting him.

Prayer.

My God, I would wish to say, in all my actions, that I love Thee, that I repent for not having always loved Thee. I would die for sorrow, because, instead of loving Thee, I have loved the world and its vanities. I would that I might love Thee as much as Thou deservest to be loved. I will never cease to love Thee nor to ask for Thy love.

ELEVENTH DAY.

Among all the functions which a priest can perform, the Mass certainly is the most excellent, the most holy, the most saintly, the most agreeable to God, and the most useful. If we could but understand with what profound devotion the angels assist thereat! Ah, what then should be the purity of the priest who celebrates! What should be his attention, his devotion! He should approach the altar with the same sentiments as Jesus Christ. He should be as an angel. He should exercise his divine ministry as a saint. He should offer the vows of the people as a pontiff. He should not be satisfied to perform the office of mediator between God and man; he should still more pray for him, remembering that he is man, and a sinful man. —*St. Laurence Justinian.*

The venerable John of Avila, seeing a priest say the holy Mass with indecent haste, was much pained. Touched with zeal, he approached this undevout priest and said in a low voice, but in a tone capable of moving the priest: "Sir, I beg of you to treat the only Son of God, in Whose presence you are, as you would treat the only son of a person whom you considered worthy of some distinction."

"I prepare myself for the holy sacrifice of the Mass," said the Bishop of Amiens, Monseigneur D'Orleans, "as I would prepare myself to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ."

St. Ignatius Loyola offered the August Sacrifice with such devotion that he was often seen to be in tears.

St. Vincent de Paul said Mass with so great modesty, so much gravity, such tenderness and piety, that his assistants were deeply touched. Many persons who assisted at his Mass, and who did not know him, were heard to say on leaving the church: "That is a priest who says Mass so devoutly that he must be a saint."

A priest who was called the Angel of the mission, during a mission which was given at Tulle, undertook to convert a gentleman who was imbued with wrong ideas of religion, and who had not been to confession for years. After many conversations, all he could obtain of him was a promise to

serve his Mass. The modesty, religion, and devotion of the missionary so struck him that he could no longer resist; he became a sincere convert.

Prayer.

My God, it is particularly in the holy Mass I will say that I love Thee. I will neglect nothing in order to be penetrated with the sentiments of Jesus Christ. I will praise and thank God with Him. I will immolate myself with Him. I will not forget that I am Thy victim—a victim devoted to Thy glory, who should sacrifice himself without ceasing for Thee.

TWELFTH DAY.

The Divine Office is one of the most excellent of actions. In reciting it we celebrate the praises of God, which is the ministry which belongs to the angels. We should not then acquit ourselves of this duty through habit and without piety, but with all the devotion and religion of which we are capable.—*St. Magdalene of Pazzi.*

This saint could not hear the signal for recitation of the Divine Office without being filled with joy.

It sufficed for Father Suarez to take in his hands his breviary to be plunged in recollection.

A holy religious always said at the commencement of each psalm: *Pater cælestis, du mihi spiritum*, “Heavenly Father, fill me with Thy spirit.”

St. Bonaventure, during this time, imagined that he was among the angels and was one of their choir.

A very worthy priest never commenced the Office before renouncing the capital sins and all distractions, and after having made an act of contrition and of the love of God. He offered it for some special end, renewing his intention at the end of each psalm in pronouncing *Gloria Patri*. He said interiorly, “I love Thee,” at these words: *Dominus, Deus, Jesus*. After the recitation of his Office he thanked God for the graces he had received, asked pardon for the faults he had committed, and finished by these words: “*Psallam spiritu, psallam et mente.*”

Another religious had an excellent practice against voluntary distractions. She imagined to herself her angel guardian on one side of her, who wrote down all the verses she recited with devotion, on the other side the demon, who listened attentively to note down all the distractions and indeviotions of which she was guilty.

St. Catherine of Bologna said: "Is it possible to be in the midst of the angels, to sing psalms with them, and then to have voluntary distractions, to have the heart attached to the things of earth?"

Prayer.

My God, teach me to praise Thee; grant that I may praise Thee worthily. I will unite my praises to all the just of the earth and the saints of heaven. It is by Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ, and like Jesus Christ that I would praise Thee on all occasions, in all my works.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

The examination of conscience which all pious persons are in the habit of making every night before taking their rest is a great help, not only to conquer our evil inclinations, but to acquire virtue and to perform our ordinary actions well. It is not so much to discover the faults of which we have been guilty during the day that we make this examen as to conceive a lively sorrow for them, and to form the resolution not to fall again into them, and to do penance for them.—*Blessed John of Avila.*

The pagan philosophers understood how efficacious was the examination of conscience. St. Jérôme relates of Pythagoras that, among the lessons which this philosopher taught his disciples, one of the principal ones was that twice during the day they determined upon a time, morning and evening, in which to ask themselves these three questions: "What have I done? How have I done it? Have I done all that I should do?"

All the masters of the spiritual life have dwelt upon the advantages of this examination, and St. Ignatius Loyola preferred it even to prayer, for the reason that by this ex-

amination we discover the fruit that we derive from prayer. He said that if he had made any progress in virtue, he owed it to the fidelity with which he had practised this exercise.

"I do not recollect," said a holy religious, "that the devil has twice efficaciously tempted me to commit the same fault." Because in the examination which he made he conceived so great a horror for his sins that no temptation, no matter how strong, was capable of making him fall again.

Prayer.

My God, I desire after each action to throw a glance over myself. Have I done as I ought? Have I tried to do right? Pardon, Lord. I offer Thee the action I am going to do. I will do my best. Help me with Thy grace.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The sun and the moon praise God, according to the prophet; but how can these stars praise Him? It is by doing the good the Lord commands them to do, in doing this they render Him great praise. Here, then, is an excellent manner of praising God all day. Do all the good you are commanded to do; all that you do, let it be well done.—*St. Jerome.*

A virtuous girl who was a servant in a respectable house gave great edification by the promptitude, exactness, and joy with which she obeyed in all that was asked of her. One day, while sweeping an apartment with much care, she seemed to be in deep distress. A gentleman, who saw her in passing, remarked: "What is it that gives you pain? Has anything been said to you to wound you?" "No, sir," she replied, "every one in the house gives me every mark of kindness, more than I deserve. I will tell you. I attended a mission once. The missionary gave me a practice of piety which I have never forgotten. I try to be faithful to it. 'My daughter,' said he, '*do all that is commanded you to do as perfectly as you can; for the love of God and during the time you do this humble yourself as much as you can.*' When I sweep, I do it to please my Saviour, considering that the one who commands me holds His place. In doing

this, I say to myself, it would be well for me if I had as much zeal to purify my heart of its sins as I have to make this room clean. This is why I weep." The gentleman was touched, and edified those to whom he related it.

Prayer.

My God, I will constantly do all that Thou askest, and how Thou askest. I will do this for Thy love, and will not cease to humble myself.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Be careful lest you think the time lost that you give to acquit yourself perfectly of your employment. It is very agreeable to God to leave our exercises of piety which are not of obligation, when duty calls us elsewhere.—*St. Teresa.*

There was in the monastery of which St. Bernard was abbot a religious who was remarkable for his fidelity to every point of the Rule. During the time of a spiritual reading upon obedience, St. Bernard told this religious to leave the exercise and go to assist some one who then required his aid. The religious showed some repugnance to do so. "The Rule," said he, in a voice loud enough to be heard by all, "demands that we make the spiritual reading, and that it be done now. Must we not observe the Rule?" The saint only said in reply: "My Brother, is it not to teach you to obey that you have had a reading upon obedience?"

A young lady who was in a convent desired ardently to become a religious. She acquainted her parents with her wishes. Instead of consenting, they compelled her to return to her home. Her piety was truly solid. "I will be a religious in the world, since I cannot be one in the convent," said she. She followed as closely as possible all the exercises of a person consecrated to God. A certain part of the time she gave to work, but she had a part reserved for meditation, another for reciting the Divine Office, the beads, the spiritual reading, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, etc. Her moth-

er, seeing her only more confirmed in her resolution instead of growing indifferent, gave her so many occupations each day that she no longer found time for her exercises. This is how this servant of God conducted herself : to obey her mother constantly as if it were God; to do all in a spirit of faith and love; to make at certain times a number of aspirations. Within her own heart was an oratory, where she was always in prayer even in the time of most distracting occupations. In this manner was every virtue so deeply implanted in her heart that in time, when she had permission to enter religion, she performed miracles, and after her death the Church placed her in the ranks of those she honors as saints.

Prayer.

My God, grant me grace to perform all my actions with a spirit of love and faith, to make without ceasing aspirations, to make of my heart an oratory where I will be in perpetual adoration.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Do not fear that those occupations which come under the rule of obedience, no matter how great or how multiplied they may be, can be a hindrance to union with God. If they are performed in the presence of God and for His glory, on the contrary, they unite one more intimately with God; for how can that which unites our will with God's keep us afar from Him?—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Exterior occupations were not for St. Magdalene of Pazzi an obstacle to recollection; they were not even a cause of distraction. "It is the same to me," she said one day, "whether I am ordered to go to pray with my Sisters in the choir or to do some manual labor. Oftentimes I have found more of God in work than in prayer."

A Brother who was cook in a convent of Franciscans was in the habit, when his work was finished, to retire to pray. Our Lord then inundated his soul with most delicious consolations. At last, in order to continually enjoy this great happiness, he asked his Superior to relieve him

of his employment, which, he said, was so dissipating. The Superior consented. But now, in giving himself up to prayer, which had before for him so many attractions and in which he had tasted so much sweetness, he found nothing but dryness and distraction. Made wise by experience, he went with simplicity to his Superior, made known to him the state of his soul, returned to his employment, and Our Lord made him understand, as before, how sweet He is to those whose nourishment is the accomplishment of His will.

Prayer.

My God, grant that all my actions may unite me more intimately with Thee. I will do all in Thy presence, for Thy glory and love.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Little actions are great when they are well done. A little action done for the glory of God, with a great desire to please Him, is more agreeable to Him than a great one performed with less fervor. We must, then, study especially to do well little things which are so easy, and which offer themselves at every moment, if we would grow in the friendship of God.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Ignatius once said of an excellent Christian, who was a mason, that he made as many crowns in heaven as he placed stones and gave strokes of the hammer, because of the purity of his intention and the great love which animated all his work.

St. Francis Xavier was particularly attentive to do well little things. He used to say: "He who does not labor to excel in small things will never excel in great ones."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may strive to excel in small things, by doing the least action with a great desire to please Thee.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

One *Pater noster* said from the depths of the heart is of more value in the eyes of God than a great number of prayers said with haste and without attention.—*St. Teresa.*

A great sinner having confessed his sins, and being penetrated with a deep sorrow, his confessor imposed a penance in proportion to the greatness and number of his faults. This penance, which to another would seem great, appeared to him so light that he exclaimed: "What, my Father, for so many and so frightful sins so mild a penance! You forget." The confessor, diminishing it, said to him: "You will only recite once the seven penitential psalms, entering into the sentiments of the prophet." "O my Father," replied the penitent, "I did not ask you to lessen the penance; I beg that you will, on the contrary, increase it. I would wish to do penance in this world rather than in the next." The confessor paid no attention to his pleadings, but finished by saying: "I relieve you from the obligation of reciting the seven psalms. I impose no other penance than an act of contrition and of the love of God, which you will make before the altar." This true penitent, upon leaving the confessional, said: "Only an act of contrition and an act of the love of God. What a penance for sins so terrible!" He made these acts and died. May we not say he died of contrition and of love? O delicious death!

David said, *Peccavi*, and he was justified the same moment. We have pronounced these words a million times, as often as we have said the confiteor. Have they produced in us the same effect?

Prayer.

My God, I desire to make no prayer that does not come from the heart. Give me a love of prayer, a spirit of prayer.

NINETEENTH DAY.

He who has not experienced it cannot understand how important it is to our sanctification to be attentive and not to be unfaithful in little things. The demon makes use of this means to make us unfaithful in great ones.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Laurence Justinian was more attentive to avoid failing in small things than in more considerable faults. He gave as a reason that when we have a horror of small sins, we have a horror also for greater ones. It suffices to have faith, and not to be deprived of sense, to fly those sins which make us worthy of eternal damnation; but it belongs to the servants of God to fear more than death little sins. He who fears God, said the Holy Ghost, neglects nothing, omits nothing.

There are communities, like that of the Trappists, where a religious, if he be guilty of a great fault, is punished very lightly, if at all; but they do not spare those who fail in little things. Spiritual advantage particularly demands it. It is the great means of preserving in a house religious regularity.

Prayer.

My God, I take the resolution to be faithful in little things. I will be faithful in them so that I may not fall into greater, and to show that I love Thee.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Think of God during the time that you are occupied. If He abandons you, you cannot make a step without falling. Imitate little children, who with one hand cling to their mother, while they do as they will with the other. In all your actions turn yourself from time to time towards your heavenly Father, to see if that which you do is pleasing to Him, and to implore His help. You will do better what you have to do, and you will find that easy which before was difficult. Represent to yourself Mary, using one hand to work while with the other she holds the Divine Infant.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

During the time that St. Magdalene of Pazzi was exteriorly occupied it seemed, said her companions, that it

was only her body that acted, and that her soul was more united to Him Whom she loved than to the body which it animated.

When St. Vincent de Paul was engaged in any business, even the most intricate, his conversation seemed to be more in heaven with God than on earth with men.

Some one, seeing a poor woman weeping while cooking, asked, "Why do you weep?" "Have I not just reason for tears?" said she. "It takes but a little fire to cook these vegetables, while neither the perfections of God, which are infinite, nor His benefits, which are innumerable, are capable of filling my heart with the fire of love for Him."

Prayer.

My God, grant me grace to converse with Thee at all times, even in occupations the most dissipating. It is but just that my soul be as united to Thee as it is to my body.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

One of the great obstacles to the well-doing of our actions is that while we do one thing we think of another that we have done or that we are yet to do. The manner of doing each action well is to give attention only to the one we are actually performing, doing it as perfectly as we can, and when it is done think no more of it, lest it prevent us from occupying ourselves well with what we have on hand.—*John of Avila.*

Age quod agis, "What thou doest do with all thy heart," said a servant of God during all his occupations. "Do it in a manner agreeable to God. It may be the last action thou wilt perform. This action ought to have great results."

Another said to himself during his work: "We are here to labor; we must, then, labor." While he performed works of charity, he would say: "I ought to have no other desire than to implant love of God and of my neighbor in all hearts." During prayer he said: "I am here but to pray."

A holy religious, whose Superior had given her charge of different occupations, acquitted herself perfectly of all, by

saying during the time occupied with each one: "I am at present only sacristan; I am now only a portress; I am now housekeeper," etc., etc.

Prayer.

My God, I will give myself entirely to what I am doing, in order that I may do it well, thinking that Thou askest only that action, and that perhaps it may be the last I shall perform.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

Do faithfully at all times what Our Lord asks of you, and leave to God to think of all other things. I assure you, living in this manner you will find great peace.—*St. Jane Frances.*

It is thus, said she, that St. Francis of Sales lived when he performed an action or was engaged in any affair; he gave himself to it as perfectly as if it were the only thing in the world.

St. Gregory of Nazianzen said of his mother that she gave herself entirely to what she was doing; consequently she did everything marvellously well.

Prayer.

I will often say to myself, Perhaps I shall die after this action, I shall be judged by this action, I shall be eternally punished or rewarded by this action.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

A second obstacle to the goodness of our actions is precipitation. Look well to this fault, which is a capital enemy of true devotion. No action done with precipitation is well done. Those who are travelling find it best to go always with an equal step.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Philip Neri often said to those whom he directed in the paths of salvation: "We must not wish to do all in one day, nor desire to become a canonized saint in the space of a month. Discretion is opposed to it."

Be self-possessed, said another wise director of consciences, in all that you do. You will by this avoid many

faults. One does that fast enough which is well done, *Sat cito si sat bene.*

Prayer.

My God, teach me to be self-possessed. I will moderate my haste, my activity in all things, that I may do well what I ought to do. I will follow not the movement of nature but grace, to offer continually to God some sacrifice.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

The works of God are almost always done little by little; they have their commencement and their progress. One must not pretend to do all in a moment, in haste, nor think all is lost if one does not become perfect at once. We must always advance, but without anxiety. Pray much and make use of the means suggested by the Holy Ghost, paying no attention to the false maxims of the world. —*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint was very slow to decide upon any matter. Nevertheless, his slowness, which to some appeared excessive, never had any bad results, never injured any affair of which he had charge. Every one was surprised to see that he succeeded in all he undertook. Still more, at the same time that everything prospered with him he acquired treasures of merit in heaven, because charity animated all that he did for his neighbor.

Prayer.

My God, make known to me what Thou wilt that I do, and give me the courage to do it well.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Still another obstacle to the well-doing of our actions is trouble and solicitude. Great affairs do not distract us so much as small ones when these are numerous. This is why we must receive them peacefully, striving to do them in order one after the other, without anxiety. By so doing, they become for us occasions of much merit. —*St Francis of Sales.*

It was often represented to this saint how many persons of little consideration occupied so much of his time,

and with affairs of no consequence. "I know it very well," replied he, "but what shall I do? Their little affairs seem to them to be great ones, and they desire that I console them. Can I refuse? God knows that all occupations are indifferent to me so long as they belong to His service. While doing this I am not obliged to do anything else, and is it not a great work to do the will of God?"

"He who preserves the sweetness of peace in a multiplicity of affairs is almost perfect," said the same St. Francis of Sales.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may never lose the sweetness of peace in the midst of concerns the most dissipating. Let me regard the accomplishment of Thy will as the great work; let all other occupations be indifferent to me.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

It belongs to the spirit of God to act with sweetness and love, and the surest means to succeed in our undertakings is to act in like manner.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Where we love, nothing is difficult; we are content no matter in what condition we may find ourselves. "I feel much pity for you," said a person to a holy man who was poor, covered with sores, despised, and oftentimes without the necessaries of life. "I thank you for your sympathy, but why do you pity me?" said he. "I am not a subject of pity. When I have no bread, I fast; I am glad to fast for the love of God. When I am insulted and ridiculed, I rejoice that in this I resemble Our Saviour, Who was willing to suffer the contempt of men. You cannot see all the wounds of my body. I would be more afflicted if I did not have them, since God wills it. I bless God that I am treated like His Son, Who was bruised from His feet to the crown of His head. He does not suffer who loves, or who loves what he suffers. I have often heard this. Nothing is more true, as I know from experience. Let us

suffer and do all for love and we will always be content." She to whom the poor mendicant spoke thus was much edified. "I will never forget," said she, "what he said in conclusion: 'I love better this pain in my limb than if I possessed a piece of gold.'"

Prayer.

My God, give me grace to act always with mildness and love, to bless Thee and to rejoice when I have to suffer, knowing that it is the will of God and that I am a disciple of Jesus crucified.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

That which prevents certain persons from performing their actions well is that they would do too much; they overwhelm themselves with exercises of piety. The liberty of the children of God consists in doing all that one should do joyously, faithfully, and with a good heart.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint once wrote to a person who had more zeal than prudence in augmenting practices of piety: "If you wish to perform each year a greater number of spiritual exercises, you must then recite the Divine Office twice a day, since you already say it once. You fast twice a week now; there will come a time when you will fast seven times, and wishing still to increase the number of your fasts, how will you be able to fast twice in the same day? Go slowly. You have enough of pious exercises. Perform them with more joy, more fervor, and more love and you will make progress in virtue."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may do all that I ought to do for love of Thee, and with fidelity and joy.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Among many excellent means that are given to perform our actions well, I recommend this to you : To perform each of your actions as if it were to be the last one of your life. Ask yourself while you do it this question : If I were to die immediately after this, would I do it in this manner ?—*St. Vincent de Paul*.

A very virtuous priest was in the habit of making his confession every day immediately before his Mass. He became suddenly ill. "You are very sick," they said to him. "Confess as if you were sure to die now." He made this edifying reply : "Thank God, it is now thirty years since I have been confessing each day, and I have always confessed as if I were to die immediately after. It will then suffice for me now to reconcile myself with God as if I were going to say the holy Mass."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may perform each of my actions as if it were to be my last.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

One of the great artifices which the demon makes use of to discourage us and induce us to abandon the service of God is to represent to us the extreme difficulty, the impossibility even, of observing faithfully and during many years the law of God, of being continually tempted and never to yield to temptation. A very good means to assist us in not being overcome by this reflection is to think that we have but one day to live, that at the end of this day we must render an account of all our works, and that this day suffices to obtain mercy if it be employed in a holy manner.—*Rodriguez*.

St. Jerome frequently imagined he heard the trumpet sound which was to call the dead before the dreadful tribunal of Jesus Christ. This thought animated him to resist the attacks of the spirit of impurity by which he was often assailed.

"I am already on the borders of eternity; it is on the fidelity with which I will serve my God during this day that my eternal happiness depends. Shall I hesitate to serve Him as perfectly as I am able?" said another saint at the commencement of each day.

“ God has given me another day in which to love Him. How good He is in my regard! How ungrateful would I be did I not do all to please Him during this day!” said St. Francis of Sales each day.

Prayer.

O my God; how good Thou art to give me another day of life during which I can obtain grace and enrich myself for heaven!

THIRTIETH DAY.

Certain souls there are who err greatly when they imagine they cannot preserve interior repose and peace of soul in the midst of occupations and difficulties. There can be no movement greater than that of a vessel out at sea; nevertheless, those within her do not cease to rest and to sleep, and the needle in the compass remains always in its natural position, turned towards the pole. The great point, in order not to lose our peace, is to endeavor to keep the needle of our will towards the pole, which is the good pleasure of God.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Does it not seem that the numerous duties and occupations of St. Vincent de Paul would have overwhelmed him and kept his mind continually distracted? He was the counsellor and confessor of the Queen; he had the government of his congregation, and of several communities; he presided at most of the assemblies of charities; he was the soul of the ecclesiastical conferences which were often held; all unfortunates addressed themselves to him as to their father. Notwithstanding this continual ebb and flow of persons whom he saw, and affairs which he settled, he was always recollected, always master of himself, showing always an equanimity of mind, his heart always in peace, as if he had but one matter to attend, and that of little consequence.

Prayer.

My God, I desire to please Thee alone; my pleasure is Thy good pleasure. What is there that can give me

anxiety, make me lose my peace of soul, prevent me from being recollected, or make me discontented?

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

All that we do receives its value from our conformity to the will of God; for instance, eating or recreation, if I do it because it is the will of God, I merit more than if I suffered death without having that intention. Keep well in your mind this thought, and remember it in all your actions, in imitation of the carpenter, who passes all the boards he uses under the plane. It is thus you will do all with perfection.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

It was this truth of which a Jesuit Brother was well convinced when he said that when at table, taking his repast, he did as much as the apostle of the Indies, because what St. Francis Xavier did best in preaching the Gospel was to accomplish the will of God, and that he himself accomplished that will when he was in the refectory during the time the Rule required it.

It was so easy and so familiar to St. Magdalene of Pazzi to propose in all her actions to do the will of God that it seemed impossible to her that Christians could act without reflecting on this holy will.

A resolution which a holy priest took every morning, noon, and at the end of the day was to act always with God, in God, and for God. *With God*, I will do nothing contrary to the will of God; *in God*, being in a state of grace, acting in such a manner that grace be the principle of all my works. To be in a state of grace I will excite myself to a perfect act of contrition before my principal actions. I will ask of God this grace with fervor before going from one exercise to another. *For God*, I will act only through a supernatural motive for the glory of God, to please God, for the love of God, in the presence of God, uniting myself to Jesús Christ at all times.

Prayer.

Lord, grant that I may do nothing that is not in conformity to Thy holy will.

SEPTEMBER.

Prayer.

"We ought always to pray."—ST. LUKE xviii. 1.

FIRST DAY.

There is certainly nothing more useful than prayer. This is why we should esteem it, love it much, and neglect nothing in order to do it well.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

All the saints have shown much affection for this exercise. St. Cajetan employed eight hours of the day in prayer. St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, and St. Stephen, King of Hungary, spent most of the night in prayer. St. Francis gave to prayer all the time that the obligations of his state left him at liberty. St. Louis Gonzaga while still young spent each day one or two hours in prayer. One might say that St. Magdalene of Pazzi lived in prayer. There have been saints, such as St. Philip Neri and St. Francis of Sales, who were always in prayer, even while in the midst of important affairs.

Prayer.

My God, give me a great esteem for prayer. Grant that I may love prayer, and that I may acquit myself worthily of this salutary exercise.

SECOND DAY.

A prayer well made is most agreeable to the angels. For this reason they love much those who pray. On the contrary, prayer is a torment to the demons, who endeavor to distract and trouble those who give themselves to this holy exercise.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

"Let us go and enrage the demon," said a servant of God when he was about to pray.

"Why is it that there is no time in which the devil wages greater warfare against us than in the time of prayer?" asked a person of a holy priest. "There is no exercise which the demon desires more than that we should do badly, because there is none which brings upon us more graces and which is more salutary. He who prays well always will soon be an angel."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may always pray well. Grant that I may pray in a manner that will honor Thee and be agreeable to Thee, in a manner useful to me in time and eternity.

THIRD DAY.

Souls who neglect the exercise of prayer are like a paralyzed and crippled body, which has hands and feet but does not make use of them. Accordingly, I think it is leaving the true path to abandon the salutary exercise of prayer. Prayer is the door through which Our Saviour passes to us His graces. If this door be closed, what will become of us?—*St. Teresa.*

"I have had a sad experience of this," said the saint. "Having abandoned prayer for some time, I began to fall into many faults and sins, although they were not of great magnitude. I became every day less Christian, and I would have been infallibly lost, as Our Saviour made me understand, if I had not returned to the salutary exercise of prayer."

Prayer.

My God, give me esteem and love for prayer. I will be faithful to it. Do not permit me to neglect so salutary an exercise.

FOURTH DAY.

We may hold it for certain that they who persevere in the exercise of prayer will not be lost, no matter how great or how multiplied their sins may be, or how frequent the temptations with which the demon assails them. Sooner or later the Lord will deliver them from peril, and conduct them to the port of salvation.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Mary of Egypt after her conversion was continually tormented during the space of seventeen years by horrible

temptations. She was always victorious over these assaults of the spirit of impurity, because she never ceased to pray. It was through this means that St. Margaret of Cartona was preserved from falling, notwithstanding the vivacity of her passions and the continual temptations that the remembrance of her many disorders occasioned her.

When one who is in a holy state allows himself to fall into sin, how frightful the depth to which he sinks. How difficult it is to rise again! nevertheless it can be accomplished through meditation and constant prayer. A priest in Italy who had become a monster of iniquities, and who deserved the most rigorous punishment of the law, was imprisoned in a frightful dungeon. He suffered a kind of hell—as he could not entirely smother the voice of conscience—from remorse and the despair into which the sight of his sins had thrown him, as well as from fear of the punishment that awaited him. A zealous missionary asked and obtained permission to visit him. The priest was furious upon seeing the missionary. But charity is not easily vanquished. The missionary, taking his crucifix, placed it where the rays of light fell on it, and said: “I ask you, sir, to look often upon this image of Our Saviour, Who has died for sinners and Who calls them to repentance.” He left him a book for spiritual retreats, exhorting him to make use of the condition in which he found himself, and make salutary reflections for his soul’s advantage. The unfortunate man, who seemed to be hastening towards final impenitence, found salvation in these means offered him. Upon reading the pious meditations, and studying the crucifix, he found how guilty he had been. He wept bitterly, never ceasing to beg for mercy through Jesus Christ. His prayers were heard. He begged to see the one who had been instrumental in his conversion. He made a confession with deepest contrition. In the depth of his contrition he acknowledged many crimes for which he was not convicted, even some of which he was not suspected. “Happy,” said he, “if I escape eternal torments

by enduring here those which I have deserved." He was granted the liberty to go among the prisoners, where he labored so efficaciously for their sanctification, by the good example he gave, by touching exhortations, and by different exercises of piety which he introduced, that this place of horror and sin became a place of benediction, and might be called a monastery of true penitence. Although perfectly converted, he was still a criminal, and waited with submission, almost with impatience, the word which was to condemn him to the most rigorous punishment. But before the time arrived which was fixed for his execution, he fell dangerously ill, and died in sentiments of deepest contrition and love. "I have great confidence that Our Saviour will be merciful," said he, when dying. "I think I have wept sincerely for all the sins by which I have offended a God so infinitely perfect. So long, alas! I had not loved a father so tender. But I feel that I love Him now." How salutary are the fruits of meditation and prayer!

Prayer.

O my God, happy he who meditates in recollection, before the image of Jesus crucified, upon the mercies of the Lord. I will abase myself in Thy presence, and say: My Father, I have sinned; have mercy on me.

FIFTH DAY.

A man of prayer is capable of doing all things. For this reason it is of importance that missionaries should especially love this exercise, without which they will gather little or no fruit. With its help they will more readily soften hearts and gain souls to their Creator than if they were learned in human science or had the gift of oratory.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Francis Borgia was truly a man of prayer. After hours passed in prayer he felt as if he had but spent a few moments with God. When he went into the pulpit to speak the divine word, many among his audience were seen to weep; others carried with them from the holy temple sentiments of true penance.

Ven. Louis of Grenada, at the end of a fervent prayer and meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ, determined to preach on this great subject, as it was Good Friday. He took for his text these words: *The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. Hardly had he pronounced these words than tears fell in such abundance from his eyes that he could do no more than repeat two or three times over the same words, in a voice choking with sobs. There never was a shorter sermon, never a more efficacious one. Tears fell from the audience, accompanied by the fruit of sincere repentance.

St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure acknowledged that it was in the exercise of prayer more than in the reading of books they had found that sublime knowledge for which one merited the title of Angelic Doctor, the other Seraphic Doctor. Whenever St. Thomas desired to discover the meaning of a difficult text which he did not understand, he betook himself to prayer, and soon he was enlightened upon that which he sought.

Prayer.

O my God, look upon my misery and have pity on me. My mind is in darkness; my heart is cold; I am weak. But I will teach myself to pray, and Thou wilt enlighten me, Thou wilt fortify me.

SIXTH DAY.

Before treating with men on spiritual things, entertain yourself with God in prayer, divesting yourself of your own thoughts to receive those of the Holy Ghost, Who alone can enlighten the mind and influence the heart. Especially must Superiors have close communication with God, having recourse to Him in every occurrence, to learn what they should teach to others, and the manner in which it should be taught, like Moses, who announced to the people of Israel what the Lord had taught him, saying: "This is what the Lord said."—*St. Vincent de Paul*.

The abbot Pamboon replied to those who came to seek his counsel: "Give me time to think." He immediately commenced to pray; and if Our Lord enlightened him, he

acquainted those who had asked his advice; but if not, he refused to give any opinion.

St. Ignatius, who depended upon divine wisdom alone, never determined any affair of consequence without first recommending it to God in prayer.

Prayer.

My God, I will undertake nothing, I will give no counsel, without first offering it to Thee. Give me wisdom, that it may assist me continually.

SEVENTH DAY.

Mental prayer consists in well understanding what we say, considering Who it is to Whom we speak, and what we are who dare to speak to a God Who is so great. It is still more: it is to entertain ourselves with God as a friend with his friend, knowing that He loves us; and making the many reflections in our mind that this thought should produce,—this to my mind is mental prayer.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Ignatius was travelling with several of his companions. Each one carried a small bag containing some necessaries with him. A good Christian, thinking they were fatigued, offered to assist them, begging them to accept his services as a favor to himself. They at last consented. When they had arrived at the place in which they were to pass the night, this man, seeing the good Fathers kneel down to pray, did the same, and remained kneeling during all the time the others prayed. When the time fixed for this exercise was ended they arose from their knees. They perceived that the man arose also. "What have you done all this time?" they asked him. His reply edified them greatly. "I have done only this," said he; "I have said: 'Lord, these men who pray so devoutly are saints, and I am only their beast of burden. My intention is the same as theirs; what they say to Thee I also say.'" This was his prayer, during the whole of the journey. Through this means he rose to a sublime degree of prayer.

Prayer.

My God, how can one have faith or love Thee, and not find his delight in the holy exercise of prayer? What so sweet as to humble one's self before God, to address Him, to listen to His voice, to converse as a friend with a friend, as a child with a tender father?

EIGHTH DAY.

While speaking with the lips to God, if at the same time we speak with the heart, keeping well in mind it is to God we are addressing ourselves, and, entering into the sentiments the words express, we then pray both vocally and mentally. Such a prayer is of great service.—*St. Teresa.*

A pious priest, whilst discoursing with the mistress of an inn where he was stopping, suggested that she might sanctify every action of the day. "I try to do so," she replied. "I have a little particular prayer for each action. I recite it as devoutly as I can, uniting myself to the Church triumphant, militant, and suffering. I have done this for twelve years." "Who suggested this excellent practice to you?" asked he. "A Capuchin missionary who gave a mission some time since," she replied, "and who reaped abundant fruit from his labors in that mission." The priest exhorted her to continue in this pious practice, also to encourage her children to do the same.

Prayer.

My God, I take the resolution to offer all my actions to Thee, to be sanctified and blessed, that I may perform them in a manner agreeable to Thee and beneficial for myself.

NINTH DAY.

When in prayer we find ourselves touched with some holy affection, it is not the time to multiply reflections, but to stop, meditate, address one's self to God in words of compunction, of love, of abandonment, according as the inclination may move us. This is the best kind of prayer.—*St. Jane Frances.*

St. Cyril shows by comparison how one should meditate. "How does one act who would strike a light? He takes

a flint and strikes the stone with a steel until the fire ignites whatever he wishes it to fall upon. In like manner he who meditates ought by considerations and reasonings of the mind strike the stone of the heart until the love of God, desire of humility, mortification, and other virtues enter it. The heart being once inflamed, all that is necessary is to tend this divine fire."

A servant of God, who generally meditated on the Passion of Jesus Christ, well understood this practice. He first represented to his mind Jesus suffering. As soon as he was touched by sentiments of love, gratitude, or sorrow for sin, or a desire to imitate his divine Model, he sought no further, but dwelt upon these pious thoughts. When growing cold, he made other reflections to animate them, as follows: "What terrible torments! Who is it that has endured them? It is the Son of God! the Son of God! For whom has He suffered thus? It is for me! for me! O charity! The Son of God has suffered to such an excess for me! What! for me—a vile nothing, a being so often rebellious? The Son of God has become for me a Man of sorrows, and I have no courage to suffer something for love of Him! After having suffered all that love could suffer, and for my salvation alone, I will not detest sin, I will even offend this God of love, and renew the sorrows of His passion! I crucify Him anew in my heart! Where is my gratitude? Where is my humanity? Have I a heart, have I faith? Ah, how I should blush and repent for having thus treated my God! No, I will not offend Him again. He has loved me so prodigiously, and I have not loved Him as much as I was capable of doing. O my God, I love Thee, I will always love Thee. Grant that I may love Thee as Thou deservest to be loved." It is in this manner we should meditate, having the affections follow the reflections, reflecting only to produce holy affections.

Prayer.

My God, deign to inspire me during prayer with those reflections I ought to make, and with the resolutions I

ought to form. Let it be Thy holy Spirit Who will pray in me.

TENTH DAY.

Those souls who are not solidly established in piety walk bravely and are content when Our Lord gives them consolations during prayer; but if He deprives them of these, they are discontented,—like little children who thank their mother when she gives them sweets, and cry when she takes them away, not knowing they are dangerous when taken in large quantities. Sensible consolations engender complacency. This complacency gives birth to pride, which is the poison of the soul and corrupts every good work. Our Saviour lavishes spiritual consolations when we enter the way of piety, in order to attract us to Him; afterwards He deprives us of them to try us and lest they might become hurtful to us. Ought we not to thank Him as well when He takes them as when He gives them to us?—*St. Francis of Sales.*

A great servant of God said he had been faithful for forty years in praying without any interior consolation; nevertheless, this exercise had been very salutary for him. "I rejoice and I thank God," said he, "that I have served Him in a manner at my own expense."

St. John Berchmans experienced at times, while in prayer, inexpressible sweetness; but he had also days on which his soul was plunged in greatest dryness. He never lost courage nor disquieted himself when in this state.

Prayer.

My God, treat me whilst in prayer, not according to my natural inclination, but according to my needs. Show Thyself to me, hide Thyself, or reproach me, or say Thou lovest me; it is all the same. It is not sweetness I seek; it is the accomplishment of Thy will and Thy love I desire.

ELEVENTH DAY.

When a soul is oppressed with aridity or sterility it should make acts of abasement, of confidence, and of conformity to the will of God, standing in His presence as a poor subject before the king, making use of words to express loving submission to His divine will.
—*St. Jane Frances.*

"I desire no other kind of prayer," said St. Teresa, "than that which makes me grow in virtue. Therefore I regard as good prayer that made with dryness and temptation, because it makes me more humble. Can we say we do not pray if we offer to God our troubles, or, if suffering, we conform to His holy will? It is a much better prayer than if the head is full of divers reflections, and we persuade ourselves that we pray fervently if we succeed in shedding a few tears."

"What do you do," it was asked of that great servant of God, St. John Berchmans, "to profit by spiritual dryness?" "I pray," he replied, "I occupy myself, and I practise patience."

St. Philip Neri said that in the time of spiritual dryness and desolation it was very useful to imagine yourself a beggar in the presence of God and His saints, and to beg an alms, sometimes of Jesus Christ, sometimes of the Blessed Virgin, of our angel guardian, of the saints, as the poor beg corporal alms from those who can assist them.

Prayer.

O my God, do not permit me to abandon prayer in distaste. Let me humble myself before Thee. I will conform myself to Thy holy will. I will ask spiritual alms for my assistance.

TWELFTH DAY.

Let him who desires that prayer be useful to him make no account of spiritual consolations. I know from experience that one who enters this path with a true determination to be thankful whether Our Lord gives him sweets and tenderness or gives them not has already made great progress on the journey.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Francis of Sales was never disquieted when tried by interior desolations or dryness. He said once to his daughter

in Christ, St. Jane Frances: "It is not my custom to reflect whether I have consolations or desolations. When Our Lord gives me good sentiments, I receive them with profound respect and simplicity; if He gives them not, I do not grieve—I stand before Him with great confidence, like a child whom He loves."

Prayer.

My God, let me be ever before Thee, as a loving child before a tender mother—with confidence and love.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

There is something more which often afflicts those who practise the holy exercise of prayer. It is distractions. Distractions sometimes arise from unmortified senses, sometimes because the soul cannot for any length of time occupy itself with the same object; but often it is permitted by God to try His servants. What is to be done when one is distracted? We must suffer this humiliation with humility and patience. The time employed thus will not be lost. Such a prayer is oftentimes more advantageous than many made with recollection and sweetness, because in banishing or supporting these distractions with the intention of pleasing God we perform so many acts of love of God.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Jane Frances gave this counsel to her Daughters of the Visitation: "When one is distracted during prayer, it is well to make the prayer of patience and to say humbly and lovingly: 'Lord, Thou art the only hope of my soul, and all my consolation.'"

St. John Chrysostom advised one who had frequent distractions to endeavor to avoid falling into this fault by making the following reflections: "What! when I entertain a friend and converse of history, news, trifles, etc., etc., I am very attentive; when entertaining myself with God on things of so great importance as the pardon of my sins, the means of salvation, I do not hesitate to let my mind dwell upon strange subjects! Being upon my knees before God, how dare I permit my thoughts to stray away from Him, to go where I am not? O hypocrisy, how crimi-

nal! Have I faith? If I have faith, I must then have lost my senses."

A pious person banished distractions by recalling this maxim of Caesarius of Arles: "When we pray, we adore the object of which we voluntarily think."

He who directed St. Louis Gonzaga in spiritual affairs interrogated him regarding his distractions. "Have you distractions during prayer?" Having reflected for a moment, the saint replied: "If I added together all that I have had during the past six months, they would occupy as much time as it would take to say one 'Hail Mary.'" This was most admirable. The reason was because he closed within himself the source of distractions; he labored continually to mortify his senses, and never permitted his mind to dwell upon subjects that did not tend to perfection or the science of his vocation.

Prayer.

My God, I will labor to destroy the kernel of distractions in myself. I will mortify myself, and endeavor to walk in Thy holy presence. I will not voluntarily occupy my mind with dissipating thoughts.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The whole care of those who give themselves to the exercise of prayer should be to conform their will to that of God. In this consists the greatest perfection we can acquire here below.—*St. Teresa.*

To conform in all things to the will of God was the principal object of all the prayers of this great saint.

St. Bernard addressed himself to God in the beginning of all his prayers as follows: "My God, I offer Thee this prayer that Thou mayst hear the ardent desire with which Thou hast inspired me to know and to do Thy will."

St. Joseph Labre, called the *poor one* of Jesus Christ, who died in the odor of sanctity in Rome in 1785, gave to those who were astonished at the humiliations and

penances of his life this answer: "God wills it thus; God wills that I walk in this path. It is not permitted that we resist the will of God. He has disposed everything for my greater good and my salvation." Such was the fruit he gathered from his prayer, which was continual.

Prayer.

Lord, inspire me with an ardent desire to know and to accomplish Thy will. This is the fruit I desire to obtain from all my prayers.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Prayer, that is all vocal prayer, should be humble, fervent, persevering, accompanied by resignation and confidence, considering that we are in the presence of God, and that we speak to Him before Whom the heavenly virtues tremble and are seized with fear and respect.—*St. Magdalene of Pazzi.*

St. Francis of Sales in his exterior was as truly devout when he prayed alone as when in the church or in public. He always knelt in a becoming posture, with his eyes closed or modestly cast down in order to be more recollected. His soul ceased not to pour forth holy aspirations, so filled was he with the holiness and goodness of God. To see him in this position was sufficient to touch others with sentiments of piety. In time of spiritual dryness he imagined himself a statue placed in an apartment, at the desire of his Master Who placed him there. "O my God," he would say, "I am here to please Thee; I desire nothing more."

Prayer.

My God, grant that in all my prayers I may be mindful of Thy sovereign majesty, Thy infinite holiness and admirable goodness. During spiritual dryness and weariness may I be resigned to Thy will, to await Thy disposal in all things!

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Disengage yourself a little from all your cares, and take some time to think of God and rest in Him. Enter into the closet of your heart, banish all else from it, reserving it for your Creator or whatever will help you to find Him. Close then the door and say to Him: "Lord, I desire that Thy will be done; teach me to know and to accomplish it."—*St. Augustin.*

St. Francis of Sales gave to the interior of his soul the name of sanctuary of God, where nothing dwelt but his soul and God. This was the place of his retreat and rest. Hence his great purity, his admirable simplicity, his profound humility, and his continual union with God.

When St. Bernard prayed, or entered the holy temple, he said: "Depart from me, vain thoughts, terrestrial affections, and thou, O my soul, enter into the judgment of thy Saviour."

Prayer.

My God, I consecrate to Thee my heart. Make it Thy temple, Thy sanctuary. May I dwell in it always, there to adore Thee without ceasing.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Those who can enclose themselves in the little heaven of their soul where He is Who created the heavens and the earth are treading a most excellent path, where, before long, they will find the waters of the fountain of life; in a short time they will have made much progress.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Catharine of Siena, who loved retirement, finding that her parents gave her the charge of many laborious and dissipating occupations, made an oratory of her own heart, where in thought she continually dwelt and from which nothing could distract her. She there meditated upon God, and lovingly conversed with Him. She was accustomed to say that our hearts are the kingdom of God, where He fixes His throne when with the angels we adore Him with faith and with love.

A fervent person abhorred very much to entertain visitors in the parlor, and would never be there except through necessity, lest she might lose the spirit of recollection. Her parents tried to persuade her that conversation was good to relax and refresh the mind. She replied that she conversed continually with Jesus Christ; that she could never find conversation more instructive and at the same time more delicious.

"What a source of delight for me," said St. Teresa, "to recollect that I have God within me, and that He alone dwells in me!"

Prayer.

My God, Thou art within me ; reign over all the powers of my soul ; do Thou alone dwell in my heart. What happiness that my heart is Thy home, Thy kingdom, a heaven ! How delicious to possess Thee, to converse with Thee at all times!

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

It is not necessary that in praying we talk much, or that in speaking to God we select the choicest expressions. It is sufficient to be profoundly recollected in His divine presence, represent simply to Him our wants and the obligation He has willed to contract through love for us to relieve them.—*St. Teresa.*

Gerson relates that a great servant of God often said : "During the space of forty years, in which I have endeavored to the best of my ability to pray, I have found no better means than to present myself before God like a child, or like a poor beggar, blind, naked, and abandoned."

This was the kind of prayer that St. Francis made when he passed entire nights repeating these words: "My God, what art Thou, and what am I?" In contemplating a God so great, so good, he abased himself in thinking of his nothingness, he was penetrated with a contrition which love had planted in his heart, he begged the Lord to hasten to the succor of one so miserable.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may be always profoundly recollected in Thy presence. I will lay my wants unceasingly before Thee. Remember, Thou hast promised to assist those who come to Thee. O Thou Who art so powerful and so good, hasten to my aid.

NINETEENTH DAY.

It is very advantageous and salutary to occupy one's self during prayer in making acts of praise and of the love of God; to form a desire and a firm purpose to please Him in all things; to rejoice in His goodness because He is sovereign perfection; to wish that all render Him the honor and glory He deserves; to recommend one's self to His mercy; to place one's self simply before Him, admiring His grandeur, humbling one's self at the sight of our miseries, then to be indifferent as to what He sends us, be it consolations or dryness, convinced that He knows which is better for us,—all these acts tend to fill the mind with holy affections. The great point is not to think much, but to love much.—*St. Teresa.*

Father Segneri, the younger, said to one of his friends: "Do not do as I have done. During the time of my studies in theology, I employed my hour of prayer in making reflections, in order to excite in me some pious sentiments. I scarcely ever offered myself to God. At last Our Lord enlightened me. I now do nothing more than recommend myself to Him and make acts of love. If I have been of any use to others, I owe it to this exercise, I think."

St. Jane Frances found her delight in contemplating the immense perfections of God, and desiring that this Sovereign Good be known and loved by all His creatures.

Prayer.

My God, I will not cease to offer myself to Thee, to praise Thee, to love Thee, to say to Thee, I am ready to do Thy will.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Image to yourself while at prayer that you are loaded with injuries, that all kind of adversity has befallen you; prepare then your heart to pardon all those who have arisen against you, and to bear patiently with all things, in imitation of Jesus Christ. By this means we make great progress in the way of perfection.—*St. Philip Neri.*

St. Ignatius, being confined to his bed for a time through illness, began to reflect seriously if anything could happen that might be capable of disturbing his peace. Having considered a long time, and passed in review all sorts of adversities, he discovered but one thing that might afflict him and take away from him his peace of soul; it was the destruction of the society of which he was the founder. Having meditated several times upon this subject, he felt that if the Lord sent him this cross, it would require but a quarter of an hour of prayer for him to recover his tranquillity, supposing that he had lost it upon receiving the news.

Prayer.

O my God, Thou hast been crucified for me. I am ready to be crucified for Thee. What cross wilt Thou give me? I am ready. I will not complain; I will bless Thee and thank Thee.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Meditate every day for a certain time on the Passion of Jesus Christ. One meditation well made upon this subject is of more value than severe penances performed for a whole year, or the recitation of the whole Psalter each day.—*Albert the Great.*

It is by continual meditation on the sufferings of Our Saviour that St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, St. Bridget arrived at so high a degree of holiness.

The great servant of God, St. Joseph Labre, never lost sight of Jesus crucified. Whenever he saw a crucifix, he said to Jesus Christ: "It is not Thou Who de-

servest to be crucified, it is I. That cross should not have been made for Thee; it is I who ought to carry it, who ought to be nailed upon it."

The venerable Palafox rested in thought on the different nails which attached Jesus Christ to the cross, like a bird that reposes in the branches of a tree. There he meditated with feelings of astonishment and love upon the frightful state to which the sins of men had reduced his divine Master, and he kissed with devotion the precious blood which covered these adorable wounds.

A priest, having heard of a young person who possessed the gift of prayer in an eminent degree, asked him in what manner he meditated. He replied: "It is on the Passion of Jesus Christ that I almost always meditate; it is in my heart that I make it. I address myself to Mary, whom I always call my good Mother. I ask her different questions. I think I hear her reply. The time appointed for meditation passes so rapidly, almost without perceiving it, and frequently during the day the thought of the subject of my meditation comes to mind." The priest, charmed with his manner of relating his story, asked what were the questions he proposed to the Blessed Virgin. He replied: "When I salute the Blessed Virgin, I say: 'Who is this I see near thee, my good mother, all covered with horrible wounds and bleeding? The hardest of hearts must be touched with compassion at the sight.' 'It is Jesus Christ my Son,' she replies. 'What! thy Son, the only Son of God made man in thee! What has brought Him to this frightful state?' She replies: 'It is men, it is thou, it is thy sins.' 'What! it is I who have treated in this manner the Son of God! This is what I have done when I sinned! Oh, how guilty am I! But why did Jesus Christ suffer like this? Could He not punish me and not Himself?' She replies: 'He has suffered voluntarily. It is to save thee from being precipitated into hell that He suffered to such an excess. It is love, and only love. He loves thee. He has delivered Himself for thee, so that thou mightst be delivered from the slavery

of sin and hell; and to obtain for thee a place in heaven by His sufferings, He has merited the graces thou requirest to arrive there.' 'O my good Mother, tell me what I must do; I am prepared for all.' She replies: 'Go, ask pardon of my Son, thy Saviour, for the sins thou hast committed. Show how grateful thou art for the great things He has done for thee; offer thyself entirely to Him, through love for Him; promise to obey Him, to imitate Him; beg Him to assist thee unceasingly.' I go then to Jesus Christ and I do as His blessed Mother counsels me."

Prayer.

O my amiable Redeemer, engrave deeply in my heart Thy sorrowful Passion. Grant that I may think unceasingly of it, and let me burn continually with Thy love.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

A friend will visit his friend in the morning to wish him a good-day, in the evening, a good-night, taking also an opportunity to converse with him during the day. In like manner make visits to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, if your duties permit it. It is especially at the foot of the altar that one prays well. In all your visits to Our Saviour, frequently offer His precious blood to the Eternal Father. You will find these visits very conducive to increase in you divine love.—*St. Magdalene of Pazzi.*

A pious person whose duties brought her out very much never passed a church without entering to offer to Jesus her homage and to recommend herself to Him.

St. Vincent de Paul visited the Blessed Sacrament as frequently as possible. It was at the feet of Jesus Christ that he took his rest after his many occupations. There, in abasement, in the presence of Our Saviour, his faith beheld Him more clearly than if he saw Him with corporal eyes. His admirable modesty, which had its birth in his deep religious sentiments, struck all who beheld him. When his advice was asked upon matters of importance, he had recourse, like Moses, to the divine tabernacles to consult the Oracle

of Truth. He never went out without first going to Our Lord to ask His blessing, and upon his return he presented himself before Him to thank Him for the graces He had given him, and to beg pardon for the faults he had committed. It might be said that his heart remained in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, while in body he was far away. He often wished that his duties permitted him to rest here in prayer all his life.

In Rome the servant of God St. Joseph Labre was called the *forty hours beggar*, because he spent the greater part of the day in those churches where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for the veneration of the faithful. When not reciting the Divine Office, or some other vocal prayer, he appeared to be in an ecstasy. "He is a saint," those would say who saw him in the church.

Prayer.

O my amiable Saviour, let my heart be always in adoration at the foot of Thy altar. I would wish to be there in prayer the rest of my life.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

It is very important that in order to pray we should know ourselves. He who knows himself well sees clearly that he is full of miseries. At this, he humbles himself, and is confounded before the Sovereign Majesty of God. What! cries he, Our Lord has done so much for me and I have done so little for Him! I have so often offended Him Whom I have so much cause to love!—*St. Teresa.*

A young anchorite once said to his master: "It seems to me, Father, that I am agreeable in the eyes of God, that I possess many virtues." "He who sees not his sins," replied the old man, "always persuades himself that he is good; but he who reflects upon the sins of which he is guilty is very far from thinking in such a manner."

St. Francis Borgia spent two hours each day in meditating and examining his own disposition of heart. Through the means of this salutary exercise he conceived so low an

opinion of himself that he was astonished that he was not despised, insulted, and ill-treated by all.

The servant of God St. Joseph Labre found in prayer such a horror of himself that he was eager for humiliations. Nothing was more delicious to him than to receive insults. A worthy priest, who esteemed him much, wished out of respect for him to kiss his feet. This was, perhaps, of all the mortifications he had to endure, the greatest. "Why do this?" said he; "is it because I am a beggar in mind and lead the life of one?"

Prayer.

O my God, what hast Thou not done for me, and what have I done for Thee? I have too many reasons to love Thee, and I have done scarcely anything but offend Thee. Pardon, Lord, a thousand thousand pardons.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

The great work of our perfection is born, grows, and is consummated by the means of two exercises, which are simple but very precious. These exercises are frequent aspirations and the consideration of God. Aspirations are certain transports of the soul towards God. These transports are the more efficacious as they are vehement and loving. The considerations of God are the more beneficial as the regards towards God are more simple. One cannot imagine the power of these two exercises to assist us in our duties, to sustain us in temptation, to raise us after our falls, and to unite us intimately with God. One can easily make them in any time or place. These exercises should be as familiar to us as it is easy for us to breathe.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Every time that St. Ignatius heard the clock strike he recollected himself and elevated his heart to God.

St. Vincent de Paul was exact to observe the same practice. When in company with others, he made the sign of the cross and some interior aspiration. When alone he said usually: "O my God! O Divine Goodness! when wilt Thou give us grace to belong entirely to Thee?"

St. Thomas Aquinas often made ejaculatory prayers at

table, at study, when he left his room, upon his return, when going from one exercise to another.

Cassian relates that the monks of Egypt frequently used these words of the prophet: *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende. Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.* "Incline unto my aid, O Lord. O Lord, make haste to help me." The anchorites of eminent virtue, being assembled to deliberate which was the best of all the practices of piety, decided upon this: to pronounce these words often and with much humility, together with a great desire to be heard.

The venerable Palafox said frequently every day: "Lord, keep me so that I may keep Thee and never be separated from Thee. I desire but Thee,—Thou Who art my God and my all."

The guardian of the hospital to which the servant of God St. Joseph Labre had retired before his death, relates that he repeated frequently and many times in the night with great devotion: "Lord, have pity on me. O my God, take pity on me."

Prayer.

O my God, how can my heart desist from saying, "I love Thee," as often as I breathe? Let my heart, so ungrateful, become grateful. Let this heart, all ice, be consumed with love for Thee.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

A practice very beneficial to the soul is to elevate the mind to God by the consideration of all His works which we see around us, admiring in them His adorable perfections, the love He bears us, and the obligation under which we are to serve Him faithfully.—*Author of the "Spiritual Combat."*

This was the continual practice of St. Francis of Sales, which he had learned in that excellent book called the *Spiritual Combat*, which he esteemed so highly that he always carried it with him. On beholding the beauties of the fields, he would say: "We are the fields which God has cul-

tivated." At the sight of a magnificent church beautifully adorned, he said: "We are the temples of the living God; why are not our souls adorned with virtue?" The flowers would suggest the thought: "When will our flowers be accompanied with fruit?" If he saw rare and beautiful paintings, he made this reflection: "There is nothing more beautiful than the soul which is made to the image of God." If he saw gardens: "When will the garden of our soul produce beautiful flowers, abundant fruit, be well cultivated, well decorated?" At the sight of a fountain, he sighed after the happy days when we shall drink without interruption at the source of the fountain of life, Our Saviour. On viewing a river, he said: "When shall we go to God, as these waters flow to the sea?" In a word, he saw nothing which did not manifest to him the God that he loved, nothing which did not elevate his heart to Him, which did not attach him still more closely to Him

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may see Thee everywhere and in everything; grant that I may be elevated towards Thee and grow in Thy love.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

There is a certain manner of prayer most simple and very useful; it is, to be habitually in the presence of God. And this sight of God will produce in us an intimate union with Him, a simple and perfect intention. Oh, how precious is this manner of prayer!—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Louis Gonzaga found nothing more easy than to be continually united to God in thought and mind. He found it as difficult not to think of God as others find it hard to think of Him unceasingly. His thoughts were never distracted from God, only when he slept. Even then, if he had dreams, God was the subject of them.

Some one said to the zealous priest Bernard, called *the poor priest*: "You never cease to speak of God; you speak

of Him too often." "I cannot help speaking of that which is ever present to my mind, of that which my heart loves," replied he.

Prayer.

My God, may I be ever in Thy presence, and grant that the thought of Thy benefits, of Thy perfections, and of Thy love fill me with joy, and unite me intimately with Thee!

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

If we walk one year continually in the presence of God, at the end of that year we will find ourselves at the summit of perfection.—*St. Teresa.*

A holy abbot gave this advice to one of his disciples: "My son, try not to lose sight of God. Think that He is with you every moment, that He regards you. This is the means of all means to arrive soon at perfection. The Lord Himself taught this way to Abraham, in saying to him: 'Walk before Me and be perfect.'" The young man, being convinced of the excellence of this advice, put it in practice and became a model of sanctity.

St. Joseph Labre had always a lively sentiment of the presence of God. It might easily be perceived in all places and at all times, by the modesty of his looks, the sanctity which shone in his countenance, that he was occupied with God alone. A priest sending him with a letter to a monastery said: "I have sent to these religious a saint who spends all his life in prayer."

Prayer.

My God, let me walk in Thy presence continually; let me never lose sight of Thee; let me think of Thee every moment. Grant that this continual remembrance of Thee may fill me with love for Thee,

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Almost all the faults that persons in religion commit against their rules and in their exercises of piety arise from the facility with which they lose sight of the presence of God.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

We do not fail in respect to a king when in his presence or when we think his eyes are upon us. Shall we sin against God, Who is present and Who sees us? said a holy priest. Why is it the saints in heaven do not, or cannot, sin? It is because they do not cease to contemplate God.

“Think of Me, and I will think of thee,” said Our Lord to a saint. He would have him understand that the continual remembrance of God is an excellent means not only of not offending God, but of enriching him with His favors.

A pious person said to her director: “My Father, the days in which I think least of God are the days in which I sin the oftenest. Give me some practice that I may never cease to think of God.” He gave her the following practices: “1st. Ask of God, in all your prayers, the graces you need to walk continually in His holy presence. 2d. When you perceive that a half-hour is passed without having thought of Him, humble yourself and say with love: ‘O God so amiable, how have I passed so long a time without occupying myself with Thee?’ 3d. Often fix your eyes upon some holy object to animate your faith.”

Prayer.

My God, I have offended Thee because I ceased to think of Thee. Grant that I may see Thee everywhere and in everything; that I may be touched by Thy perfections, and never offend Thee more, but love Thee as much as I am capable of loving.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

There is a certain manner of walking in the presence of God, in which, if the soul desires it, she can be always in prayer and continually inflamed with the presence of God. It is, to think in our different occupations that we do the will of God, and to rejoice therein.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Francis of Sales, for some years before his death, could not give much time to prayer, owing to the many duties which occupied him relating to the salvation of others. His daughter in Christ, St. Jane Frances, asked him one day if he had prayed. "No," replied he, "but I have done that which is of more value than prayer." It was that he kept himself continually united with God. "It is necessary," said he, "in this world to make a prayer of work and actions." By this means his life was a continual prayer. Not content to enjoy a delicious union with God by prayer, when there was time to pray, he was still further united to Him by the joy he experienced in constantly doing His holy will.

Prayer.

My God, grant me grace to be continually united to Thee by love, thinking that I do Thy will, and rejoicing in it.

THIRTIETH DAY.

The most sublime and the most perfect prayer is contemplation. But this kind of prayer is entirely the work of God; being supernatural, it is far above our capacity. All that the soul can do in regard to contemplation is to dispose itself for it—that is, to have deep sentiments of humility; to endeavor to acquire all the virtues, particularly fraternal charity and the love of God; to be resolved to do in all things the will of God; to walk in the way of the cross; to die to self-love, which consists more in desiring that which satisfies ourselves than in pleasing God.—*St. Teresa.*

This saint practised this means of sanctification. This is why Our Lord raised her to so high a degree of contemplation, and lavished upon her gifts so rare.

It was asked of St. Antony how he could pass whole nights in prayer. He replied: "I never knew in what true contemplation consisted as long as I sought myself. But when I had purified my mind of all thoughts capable of disquieting me, and had rooted from my heart all terrestrial affection, I commenced to taste that admirable fruit of the will of God that pure souls are accustomed to taste in contemplation."

A person very enlightened in the ways of God said: "I have learned by my own experience that to study mystical theology we must study the crucifix more than books; that is to say, we must study to practise virtue, to imitate Jesus Christ, to lead a pure life, to pray with fervor, to do faithfully and suffer constantly what God requires of us, by dying to ourselves. This is the book we must apply ourselves to read."

Prayer.

O my Saviour, I will, after Thy example, humble myself without ceasing, practise virtue, exercise acts of mercy, rejoice in the accomplishment of Thy will, carry my cross after Thee, never seek to satisfy myself, and have no desire but to please Thee. Let me be always united to Thee.

OCTOBER.

Confidence.

Have confidence.—ST. MARK vi. 50.

FIRST DAY.

Nothing is impossible to God, since His power is infinite. Nothing is difficult to God, since His wisdom is equally infinite. God desires our good with an infinite desire, since His goodness is without limit. What can be more capable of inspiring us with great confidence in Him?—*Author of the "Spiritual Combat."*

St. Francis of Sales was filled with so great a confidence in God that in the midst of the greatest disasters nothing could disturb the peace of his soul. "I cannot but be persuaded," he often said, "that he who believes in an infinite Providence, which extends even to the lowest worm, must expect good from all that happens to him."

The great confidence that man has in God, believing that He knows all, that He is able and that He desires to assist him on every occasion, is most agreeable to God; it attracts God towards him in such a manner that He cannot withhold His favors, on account of the glory this dependence and love procures Him. Our Saviour made this known to St. Gertrude, and it animated her with most lively confidence.

Prayer.

My God, I believe that Thou art capable and that Thou wishest to make us happy. Thou askest only love; I love and confide in Thee.

SECOND DAY.

It is certain that God desires that which is most advantageous to us much more than we desire it ourselves. He knows better than we by what means that which is best for us must arrive. The choice of means is entirely in His hands, since it is He Who disposes of all, regulates all things in the world. It is also certain that in events which happen, that which befalls us will always be best for us.—*St. Augustin.*

St. Francis of Sales, knowing that all the accidents of life, without exception, happen by the order of Providence, reposed in Him with the greatest tranquillity, like a child on the bosom of his mother. He said that Our Lord had inspired him with this lesson from his childhood, and that if he had to return to the world, he would despise more than ever all human wisdom, and let himself be entirely governed by divine Providence.

“Let us always serve well our good God, and He will not abandon us,” wrote to his parents that great servant of God, St. Joseph Labre.

Prayer.

O God, Who art my Father, I repose in Thee as a little child on the breast of his mother. Thou wilt not abandon me if I serve Thee with love.

THIRD DAY.

Will you have an assurance that you may and that you ought to confide in God? Here is one. Our Saviour has said, I will never abandon you; I will be always with you. If a man who is honest and powerful promised that, you would have confidence in Him. God promises, and you doubt! Do you wish a foundation more sure than the word of God, Who is infallible? Yes, yes, He has promised, He has written, He has given His word. You insult Him if you have not the greatest confidence in Him.—*St. Augustin.*

St. Hugh, Bishop of Langres, during one night was very much troubled and afflicted in thinking of some evil which threatened him. Recollecting himself, he struck

his breast, crying out: "Unfortunate that I am! God has promised to assist us in all our tribulations, and I fear! If anything of evil happen, will it not be by the permission of God, and will I not derive benefit therefrom?"

St. Rose of Lima, whose mother was naturally timid and fearful, inherited this weakness herself. She dared not go from one room to another alone without a light, unless she prayed; then she ceased to fear, or overcame it. One evening she retired into the garden to pray, and remaining longer than usual, her mother became alarmed and went to seek her. But, being afraid to go alone, she begged her husband to accompany her. When Rose saw them she excused herself, and returning with them, made this reflection: "My mother, who is timid when alone, has no fear when with her husband; and I, who am accompanied by my Divine Spouse—I, who have Him beside me, who have Him in my heart, am afraid!" This thought banished forever her terror; when thoughts of fear attacked her, she said: *Non timebo mala, quoniam tu mecum es*, "I fear nothing, since Thou art with me."

Prayer.

My God, I have the greatest confidence in Thee. Thou hast said, I will never abandon thee. I believe Thee, Thou Who art truth itself.

FOURTH DAY.

We are certainly convinced that the truths of faith cannot deceive us. Nevertheless, we act as if we were not convinced. We consult rather what human prudence dictates than faith. Hence the little advancement we make in virtue; hence, again, the little success we have in affairs which relate to the glory of God.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Antony and St. Francis of Assisi arrived at a high degree of perfection, because they followed the counsel of the Gospel, "If thou wouldst be perfect, sell all, give it to the poor, and follow Me."

St. Joseph Labre, feeling that Our Lord called him to a life

abject, poor, and austere, said: "I can do all in Him Who strengthens me." When his mother, perceiving that her son fasted often, slept nights on the floor instead of in his bed, and practised other mortifications, with maternal affection represented to him that he would injure his health, he replied: "God calls me to a life of penance and austerity. I must begin to walk in the ways of God." He asked permission to leave his home to follow his vocation to penance. She refused, saying that he would have no means of subsistence. "Let me go, mother," he pleaded. "I will live on roots, as did the anchorites. With the grace of God we can live as they did." He obeyed grace, he lived by faith; had he not reason to rejoice?

Prayer.

My God, grant that in all things I may consult faith, that I live by faith. I will do all that Thou askest of me. I trust Thou wilt come to my assistance.

FIFTH DAY.

It is absolutely necessary for our sanctification, and to be useful in the sanctification of others, to accustom ourselves to follow the beautiful light of faith, accompanied always by that unction which imperceptibly fills the heart. Certain it is that it is only eternal truths which are capable of filling our hearts and of conducting us in the sure path. Believe me, it is sufficient to establish well this foundation to arrive in a short time at perfection, and to be able to do great things.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Philip Neri regarded prayer as an efficacious means to succeed in any undertaking. "When I have the time to pray much, I hope to obtain whatever grace I ask of God, relying entirely on His promise: 'All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.'"

It is related of St. Francis of Assisi that his brother, seeing him one day, in the midst of winter, barefooted and lightly clad, to ridicule him, sent a child to ask him if he would sell an ounce of his sweat. The saint replied, smil-

ing: "Go tell my brother that I have sold it all to Him Who is my Saviour and my God, and that He has given me a good price for it."

The Blessed John of Avila professed the greatest poverty in order to preach the Gospel more efficaciously. He said he found great consolation in these words of Our Saviour, "Seek first the kingdom of God," and that this maxim had never failed him.

Prayer.

My God, I will always, in all things, follow the light of faith, and do nothing without recommending it to Thee. Come to my help.

SIXTH DAY.

O God of my soul, who will give me words to express clearly all that Thou givest to those who confide perfectly in Thee, and, on the contrary, all that they lose who confide in themselves, or who take pride in themselves for having been long faithful to grace and loaded with favors from Heaven?—*St. Teresa.*

"Lucifer, the chief of angels, fell from heaven. Judas—after having been chosen an apostle, and hearing for some years the words of eternal life from the mouth of Jesus Christ—became a deicide. Let us tremble and not cease to fear," said a saint.

When St. Teresa abounded in consolations, she addressed herself to God as follows: "O my God, how canst Thou pour Thy graces into so unclean a vase? What! hast Thou forgotten so quickly my sins?"

"To what do you attribute your fall?" said St. Philip Neri to those who, having served God for a length of time, accused themselves of grave faults. "Know that it is your pride. If you had been humble, you would not have fallen. If you would rise again, humble yourself much."

Prayer.

My God, how good, how liberal art Thou to those who, humbling themselves, trust in Thee! I will not cease to

fear, because I am weak. I will not cease to confide in Thee, because Thou art my Father.

SEVENTH DAY.

He who relies upon himself alone makes a great mistake. A Superior, for example, or a preacher, or a confessor, confiding in his own wisdom, his own knowledge or talent, will find that, to show how insufficient he is of himself, God will withdraw His assistance, and will let him act for himself. As a consequence, with all his pains, the result of his labors will be very small. With many who do not succeed in their undertakings, this is often the cause.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

We see that those saints whom Our Lord made use of for the sanctification of souls had the lowest opinion of themselves. St. Vincent Ferrer said of himself: "I am like a corpse full of worms, and ought to be an object of horror to every one. And what augments my malice is that every day I grow worse." St. Dominic was persuaded that his sins ought to bring down the judgment of God wherever he dwelt. St. Vincent de Paul often said to God: "Lord, I will ruin everything if Thou dost not regulate all my words and all my actions." St. Francis Xavier regarded himself as the most wicked of all men.

St. Jane Frances said, upon an occasion when a religious did not wish to accept the position of Superior to which she had been elevated: "If a dry and barren stick of wood could humble and abase itself before God, and were then chosen for Superior, the Divine Majesty would give this stick sufficient intelligence rather than permit it to govern illy."

Prayer.

My God, I am in Thy eyes but a vase full of evil. Deign to regulate my mind and my heart, all my words and all my works. Without Thy grace I can do no good, only evil. Thou wilt give it to me, because I will humble myself and will not cease to ask it of Thee.

EIGHTH DAY.

Let us endeavor to conceive a great diffidence in ourselves, and always to have this truth present to our mind, that of ourselves we are good for nothing, that we can but spoil the designs of God. If we keep this thought in view, it will cause us to depend entirely upon God and bring us often to Him to obtain His help.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Father Dupont has said that those causes which were for many a subject of discouragement, as the consideration of our weakness, or human frailties, or sins committed, augmented rather than lessened his confidence in God, because it obliged him to meditate upon the goodness and mercy of God, to Whom he had consecrated all that he was and all that he had.

Some one asked Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, when his army was destroyed and he himself made prisoner, what was the state of his mind. He replied that he had never been more tranquil before in his life. He gave as his reason: "When I was surrounded by human aid, I scarcely had time to think of God; but now, when deprived of it, I place all my confidence in Him. I firmly trust that He will not abandon me."

St. Philip Neri advised those whom he directed to say frequently: "Do not trust me, my God. I shall certainly fall if Thou dost not come to my help. Aid me; of myself I can only do evil."

Prayer.

Come to my help, assist me continually, O Lord. When left to myself I can only offend Thee. I place all my confidence in Thee. Thou wilt not abandon me; I ask it through the merits of my Saviour.

NINTH DAY.

I exhort you not to depend upon the friendship or the protection of men; of themselves they are not capable of helping us. When Our Saviour sees that we depend upon them, He departs from us.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint not only did not seek the protection or support of the great, but frequently refused it when voluntarily offered to him. The governor of a certain city begged him to intercede for him at the court that he might be successful in some affair he had undertaken, and promised in return that he would protect, as far as in his power, the saint's missionaries who were being molested by some parties at that time. The saint replied: "I will serve you as far as depends upon myself; but as to the congregation for which you promise to intercede, I beg of you to leave it in the hands of God and of justice." He made it a rule to seek for nothing through the favor of men.

The brother of St. Jane Frances, who was archbishop of Bourges, desired her to write to the Queen, who had recommended herself to her prayers and those of her Order, saying that it might be beneficial to her to have such a protectress. The saint replied to her brother that she would pray for her Majesty, but refused to write, saying to her religious: "I cannot and ought not to do it. We should remain humble and live a hidden life. We will not seek to attract the esteem of the great. If we do our duty to them by praying for their preservation, for their prosperity, and especially for their salvation, God, Who takes care of all, will dispose them favorably towards us when we need their protection."

St. Teresa said one day: "I understand now more than ever that there is no reliance to be placed upon the promises of men. The only Friend in Whom alone I can confide is Jesus Christ. When I lean upon Him I am strong, I feel that I could resist all the world if opposed to me."

Prayer.

Lord, Thou art my refuge, my strength. I will confide in Thee, I will always depend on Thee alone.

TENTH DAY.

Those persons who proceed in the management of their affairs with artifice or dissimulation sin against the providence of God, and render themselves unworthy of His paternal care, while God protects those who walk with simplicity.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

A wicked page was jealous of another page, who by his piety had won the esteem and affection of the king, and determined to destroy him. He accused him of a criminal attachment for the queen. The king, believing this calumny, was terribly indignant. He resolved to put the pious page, whom he looked upon as a monster of ingratitude, to death at once. Having sent secretly for the master of a forge, a man capable of any crime, he said to him: "To-morrow morning I shall send a page who will ask you, '*Have you executed the king's orders?*' You will then instantly throw him into the fire, as I have reasons for destroying him." The master of the forge promised to obey to the letter. The next day the king called the innocent page, who knew nothing of that of which he had been accused, and ordered him to go to the forge and deliver the message. The page, making a respectful inclination, started to obey. But God protects His own. On his way he passed a church where Mass was about to be said, and he entered and assisted at the Mass. Another Mass followed, and as there was no one to serve it, he offered to do so. While his devotion thus kept him in the church, the king became impatient, and said to the wicked page: "I am anxious to know if the man at the forge has done as I commanded; hasten there and ask him if he has executed my orders." He departed immediately, and arriving there he asked: "*Have you executed the king's orders?*" "I will do so instantly," the man replied. Seizing the unfortunate page, he threw

him into the furnace. The innocent one, arriving some time afterwards, was told to go back and tell the king that he had been obeyed. Imagine the king's astonishment upon beholding the page whom he supposed was dead. He asked him where he stopped by the way. His truthful reply, while discovering his piety, also manifested his innocence. The king esteemed and loved him from henceforth, and thanked God that He had permitted the imposture to be discovered and punished.

Prayer.

Lord, Thou hatest those who dissimulate, and Thou lovest those who walk in simplicity; let me never use artifice or deceit.

ELEVENTH DAY.

God takes care of those who place all their thoughts in Him and depend interiorly on Him, serving Him with great fidelity. He protects us in proportion as our confidence is great. He comes to our help in every danger, having an infinite love for souls who rest in Him.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Hugh, bishop, said that he frequently experienced that the more he devoted himself to the service of God, the more Our Lord granted him those temporal things which were necessary or useful for him.

St. Francis of Assisi and his sons had nothing, yet they never suffered for clothing to cover them nor for food to sustain them. When he sent his companions anywhere to preach, he addressed them in the words of the prophet: *Jacta super Dominum curam tuam et ipse te enutriet*, "Cast your care upon the Lord, and He will sustain you." In speaking of his community and of God, he would say: "We have a mother who is very poor, but we have a Father Who is very rich."

Our Lord spoke thus to one of his saints: "Think of Me, and I will think of thee and take care of all thy concerns."

Prayer.

My God, Thou art my Father; I have great confidence in Thee. Thou wilt not abandon me. Thou wilt take care of me because I will serve Thee faithfully.

TWELFTH DAY.

He who serves God with a pure heart and seeks only His glory may always hope that what he undertakes for God will meet with success. He has a better foundation for that hope even when, judging humanly, there is little chance of success, because the works which regard the service of God are above the judgment of human wisdom; they depend upon a higher power.—*St. Charles Borromeo.*

This holy cardinal had recourse to God by prayer in every circumstance. By prayer he commenced and terminated everything he did, and the more difficult the undertaking the more he prayed. When it seemed that he might almost despair of success, he redoubled his supplications to God without losing confidence. The Lord accordingly blessed all his enterprises; to the great astonishment of all, he succeeded where everything seemed hopeless. Wishing to inspire a person to have confidence in God, he one day related the following which had happened shortly before: "He who has charge of the affairs of my house came to me lamenting that he had no money and that he knew not how he was to meet the necessary expenses. He begged of me to be more sparing in giving alms or in giving to other works of piety, adding that unless I did so I would be completely ruined. I replied that if he trusted in God, He would come to his assistance. This did not satisfy him, and he went away very discontented. Two hours after I received a package of letters, among which was a draft for money from Spain. I sent for my economical housekeeper. Giving him the money, I said: 'Take this, man of little faith. Do you now acknowledge that Our Lord has not forsaken us?'" The saint added: "The reception of this money was truly a special providence in my regard. The sum of one thousand crowns, it is true, was due me, but

not for two months later. Have great confidence in God—I do not say a presumptuous one; it must be regulated by Christian prudence.”

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may serve Thee with a pure heart; that I may seek only Thy glory. Thou wilt come to my help in all my needs, because Thou art my Father.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

It is particularly in great necessities that we should show that we truly confide in God. Believe me, three workmen will do more than ten when God lends His hand; and He will always do this whenever He takes away human means and we are necessitated to do that which is beyond our strength.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

The steward of the house said one day to this saint that he had not a cent for the ordinary expenses, nor for those of an ordination which would soon take place. He replied with tranquil heart and face serene, full of confidence in God: “Oh, what good news! Blessed be God! Now is the time to prove that we trust in His goodness. The treasures of Providence are infinite; our distrust dishonors Him.”

Prayer.

I ask not riches, O my God, but what Thou knowest to be necessary for me. Thou art my Father, a Father infinitely rich; I am Thy child.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

When one proposes to undertake something belonging to the service of God, having invoked His light, certain that it is His will, we must make use of the human means which are necessary and proper to execute the orders of Divine Providence; nevertheless, it is not upon these mean we must rely, but solely upon the divine assistance; from this we must expect success, being well persuaded that whatever may happen will be for our advantage.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

A person recommending himself to the prayers of the saint, he replied: “I have been all the morning so occupied

with business that I have had little or no time for prayer, and even during that prayer I was much distracted; however, I am not discouraged. I am certain that the throne of the goodness and mercy of God is built upon the foundation of our miseries."

St. Ignatius, in all his undertakings, labored as if all depended upon himself, and he placed all his confidence in God, as if all depended upon God.

Prayer.

My God, I place my confidence in Thee alone. If Thou dost not assist me, nothing will prosper; if Thou dost assist me, all will succeed. I ask first the kingdom of heaven, persuaded that all else will be added.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

In the different employments and in the cares which attend them, we must not be disquieted nor act with haste. Devote a reasonable and moderate attention to them, and then leave them to Divine Providence, giving place to Him to regulate things and manifest His will. Be certain that when God wills that an undertaking succeed, delay never harms it; there is always more of Him in proportion as there is less of ourselves in it.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

The practice of this saint was to employ human help, no matter how seemly or necessary it might be, only after having had recourse to the divine. He recommended his affairs much to God, remaining tranquil that God might direct all to His own ends and greater glory. He was accustomed to say that matters succeeded well when we follow them, not precede them. One of the Ladies of Charity, full of zeal, begged him with much importunity to look for persons for the establishment of the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity. He felt that it would be difficult to find such as he thought suited for this work. Therefore, regardless of her prayers, he remained quiet, only having recourse to God by fervent prayers, waiting for Providence to discover some means to establish a

society so useful. Events proved that he had acted wisely in deferring the matter. When the time came he made use of the favorable moment the Lord presented and the matter succeeded admirably.

Prayer.

My God, I will undertake nothing without having first recommended it to Thee. I beseech Thee make Thy will known, because I will only what is Thy will.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

To seek eagerly or with much haste to provide against the accidents of life, or remedy those which attend us, shows a great want of confidence in God. In thus providing for ourselves we show that we confide more in our own care than in His protection, and that we rely more on human wisdom than on His Word.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Father Alvarez was the rector of a very poor college, and the Father who had charge of the household often came to him, relating the pressing needs of the house, and concluding always by saying there was but one thing to be done, to abandon the college. The holy rector, who confided greatly in Providence, asked him if he had recommended his affairs to God. The Father replied that he had not the time to pray. "It is the first thing you should have done," replied Father Alvarez. "Hasten now to consult God by praying for some time. Do you think this flock has no Master? or a Master Who wills not that those who belong to Him should live? Go in peace, and believe that all does not depend upon our industry." The Father obeyed, and it always happened, said he, that Providence provided for their wants by means which often appeared miraculous.

Prayer.

I firmly believe, O my God, that Thou wilt think of me, wilt watch over me, if I am faithful. Thou art the best

of masters. I will confide in Thee. Thou wilt conduct me, and nothing will fail me.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

When we have undertaken a work for God, certain that it is His will, it is necessary to be courageous and persevere to the end, no matter how multiplied or great the obstacles may be. Divine Providence never fails in things which we have commenced by His order.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Never was this saint discouraged by difficulties. In proportion as he saw obstacles, he showed more constancy and resolution.

St. Jane Frances said of St. Francis of Sales that she never knew a soul stronger or more generous when there was question of carrying out an enterprise which God had inspired him to undertake. St. Francis Xavier hastened to wherever he saw something to be done for the honor of God, fearing neither difficulty nor peril. This is why he succeeded in all he undertook.

Prayer.

My God, I can do all things if Thou strengthen me. If Thou art with me who will be against me? Obstacles shall never prevent me from doing what I know Thou desirest, what is Thy will.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

Let us place our confidence in God and establish ourselves in an entire dependence on Him. Then fear not what men may say or do against us, all will turn to our advantage. Yes, if all the earth should rise up against us, nothing will happen but as God pleases, in Whom we have established our hopes.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

A missionary of his congregation having written to the saint that some powerful persons were endeavoring to destroy the society, he replied, "Let us firmly establish ourselves in an entire dependence on the holy providence of God; let us not be alarmed by these idle fears; for the rest, nothing will happen but as God wills."

Prayer.

My God, I depend entirely on Thy providence. I place in Thee my hope. Nothing will happen to me except as Thou wilt. I will bless Thee for all. I desire only to do Thy will, to please Thee.

NINETEENTH DAY.

Weak souls, who are filled with self-love and a desire to be esteemed, at the first sign of the slightest calumny take fire, burn with indignation, and cannot recover their peace without many words escaping them. It is not thus with generous souls, who seek only to please God. They know well that God sees their innocence, and that He will not fail to defend them in the way which is most for their good.—*St. Augustin.*

St. Francis of Sales wrote to the Bishop of Belley as follows : “I have learned that in Paris they have torn my reputation in a most beautiful manner, but I hope that God will mend it so that it will be better than ever, if that be necessary for His service. I desire no other reputation than what is necessary for that. Provided that God is served, what matters it to me if it be done with a good or a bad reputation?” Let him dispose of me as He wills, since I belong to Him. If my abjection serves for His glory, should I not glory in being lowly and despised?

At another time a great calumny was invented against this saint in a matter of chastity. He did not try to justify himself, dear as this virtue was to him, of that of which he was accused. His friends, astonished that he did not defend himself, endeavored to convince him that he was obliged to do so. “A good reputation,” said they, “is necessary that our ministry be not unfruitful.” He only replied, “God knows what good name I need for my ministry; I desire no more.”

Prayer.

My God, I will seek in all things to please Thee. I belong to Thee, dispose of me as Thou wilt. Dost Thou will

that I be persecuted, despised? If it be for Thy glory I am resigned, I will it, I desire it.

TWENTIETH DAY.

When one places all his confidence in God, God favors him with a special protection, and he may be sure nothing evil will happen to him.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Benedict Joseph Labre, placing all his confidence in God, wrote thus to his parents: "Be not anxious in my regard; I am happy because the All-powerful conducts me." Did God abandon him? Did He not always give him proof of the most singular protection? If he was poor, it was because he wished to be so. He was content to ask, about the middle of the day, at the door of some charitable person, for a little soup to nourish his body, to which with truth he gave the name of *corpse*; and he had always plenty besides, so numerous were the alms he was forced to accept from the many poor who followed him. Notwithstanding the mortifications which he inflicted on himself, what sweet consolations inundated his soul during his prayer which never ceased, and in what a very short time has not Our Lord made famous throughout the Christian world the name of him who, during his life, sought only to be ignored and despised! The *holy beggar* has reason to rejoice that he followed the call of grace and confided so perfectly in God.

Prayer.

Lord, I place all my confidence in Thee. What evil can befall me? Thou wilt take me under Thy protection; Thou wilt come to my aid; Thou wilt fill me with the highest good.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

When we have placed ourselves entirely in the hands of God by an entire confidence, we need have no longer any fear of adversity. If Our Lord permits any to happen to us, He can turn it to our advantage by ways which we do not understand now, but which we will understand some day.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

The following happened to St. Francis of Sales while a young man in Rome. He was lodging in a hotel which was on the bank of the Tiber. One night he heard those who were in his company disputing with the landlord. This man, who was very avaricious, desired the party and their master, St. Francis, to go elsewhere and give up their place to some parties who had just arrived and whom he considered of great distinction. The dispute would have ended in a fight had not St. Francis said to his domestics with much sweetness: "The landlord is master; since he will not lodge us here, let us go elsewhere." They then took all belonging to them, and found another place at a distance from the Tiber. Hardly had they arrived there than the rain fell in torrents, the river overflowed its banks, the hotel which the saint was compelled to leave was destroyed, and not a person in it escaped alive.

St. Ignatius, on his return from the Holy Land, arriving at Cyprus, wished to embark for Italy. Three vessels were ready to depart. One was a Turkish, one a Venetian, —a large, strong boat,—the third was old, small, and badly equipped. Some persons asked the master of the Venetian vessel to take Ignatius for the love of God, assuring him it would be to his advantage, as he was a saint. He refused, because he saw Ignatius was poor and no one offered to pay for him. "If he is a saint," said he, "he has no need of a vessel to cross the sea. Let him do as other saints have done—walk over it." Ignatius was then obliged to go on the poor vessel, where he was received for charity and shown much respect. The three vessels started with a favorable wind. In a short time a furious tempest arose on the sea. The

Turkish vessel was lost; the Venetian one was thrown on a sand-bank, where it went to pieces; but the vessel which held the saint, and which seemed the one that most naturally would be the first to perish, arrived safely in port. It is thus that the Lord favors with His protection His servants who confide in Him even when He seems to send them afflictions.

Prayer.

My God, I place myself in Thy hands. I confide in Thee. I fear no adversity. If any befall me, I hope Thou wilt turn it to my salvation.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

When we find ourselves in danger we should not lose courage, but confide much in Our Lord. The greater the peril, the nearer is the help of Him Who calls Himself our aid in tribulation.—*St. Ambrose.*

St. Ignatius was on the sea at one time when a great tempest arose. The sails of the vessel were torn to pieces; all on board, except the saint, were in fright and tears; they expected nothing but death. St. Ignatius alone was tranquil and without fear. He was calm because these words were present to his mind: "*The winds and the sea obey the Lord.*" "The tempest did not arise without His permission," he said, "and without it we cannot be lost. The Lord is master. If He wills that I perish in the waters, I consent, I will it. I confide in His mercy."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may not lose courage in the time of danger. I will remember then that Thou art called *our help in tribulation*, and I will confide in Thee. When I walk in the shadow of death, I will not fear the dangers that threaten me, remembering that Thou art with me.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

He who does not lose courage in unexpected disasters, but has immediate recourse to God with confidence, shows that this virtue is deeply rooted in him.—*Rodriguez.*

St. Columba once found himself suddenly surrounded by twelve wolves, who were about to devour him. He was not affrighted at this terrible sight, but invoked Our Lord with great confidence, saying, "O God, come to my assistance. O Lord, make haste to help me." Hardly had he pronounced these words than God heard his prayer, and the wolves took to flight.

A soldier once raised his sword to give St. Martin a blow on the head, when, perceiving that the saint showed no sign of fear, he exclaimed: "What! you do not fear?" "Why should I fear?" replied the saint. "Death is not an evil; I look upon it as a gain. Far from fearing it, I desire it."

St. Benedict Joseph Labre was passing along one of the streets of Rome where were gathered a number of young people of the lowest class, when these shouted after him and insulted him. He appeared not to notice it. They followed him, throwing stones at him. Still he went on. One of the stones struck him on the leg, and caused the blood to flow, but the servant of God did not turn in his course, nor make any sign that he felt the blow.

Some one asked the Abbé Theodore, a man of eminent sanctity, whether he would not fear should some terrible and unexpected commotion of nature take place. "No," replied he; "if the entire world should crumble and the heavens unite with the earth, Theodore would not tremble."

Prayer.

* My God, grant that I may not lose courage in adversity. I will often say in that time, Lord, come to my succor, make haste to help me.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

He who places himself in the arms of Providence and abandons himself to its guidance, goes in a carriage and does not feel the weight of the cross he carries. He who does not, goes on foot and fatigues himself greatly.—*St. Basil.*

There was in a small town of Italy a young girl, very poor, who was an invalid and obliged to remain all the time in the same position on a miserable bed. Persons who visited her were greatly edified, as she seemed content and never complained. Some persons speaking in her presence of a great famine with which Italy was threatened, she appeared to take no notice of it. "How," said they, "can you be so tranquil in the midst of so much misery?" She answered: "All my thoughts are placed in God. I am like a little bird under the wings of His providence. What have I to fear, or why should I trouble myself?"

Prayer.

Lord, I throw myself into the arms of Thy providence; I abandon myself to Thy guidance. Oh, how sweet amid the most violent storms to repose on Thy heart!

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

A servant of God should fear nothing in the whole world, not even the demons. When the demons perceive that they are despised, they lose their strength and we are the masters. If the Lord is all-powerful and the demons are His slaves, what harm can they do those who serve so great a King?—*St. Teresa.*

This saint was naturally timid, but considering one day how foolish it was to fear anything but the displeasure of God, a Master so great and so powerful, Who governed all things, and Whom she desired ardently to serve, wishing only to please Him, she said to herself: "Why do you fear? Of what are you afraid?" Taking a crucifix in her hands, she defied all the demons, saying: "Come, come all of you.

I am the servant of the Lord. I wish to see what you can make me do." From that moment she feared nothing. She made no more account of demons than she would of flies. So she herself tells us.

Prayer.

My God, Thou art my Master, a Master infinitely good and powerful. I love Thee more than I fear Thee. I fear only to offend Thee. As to men or demons, I will fear them not ; they can only do to me as Thou wilt.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

No matter how great or how multiplied the sins may be we have committed, we should never despair of our salvation nor lose confidence in God, because the divine clemency is infinitely greater than the malice of man.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

St. Bernard, being sick, was tempted to despair. "I have done nothing," he said, "to merit heaven." In order to banish this thought, which was ever present to his mind, he addressed himself to God, and said : "O my God, I know that I have not earned Paradise by my works. I am not worthy of this great happiness, but two things make me hope for a place therein—I am Thy child, and Jesus Christ has died for me."

"Have confidence," said a priest to a sinner who despaired. "Have confidence. Jesus Christ is continually before His Father occupied in interceding for our salvation. Each time that we soil our hearts by criminal thoughts He offers in expiation his most pure heart ; each time we sin by our actions He offers His pierced hands. We never commit a sin that He does not immediately seek to appease His divine Father, so that if we sincerely repent we obtain pardon."

At the remembrance of his grievous sins a criminal fell into despair and obstinately refused to confess them. St. Vincent Ferrer hastened to visit him. He said to him:

"My dear brother, you know that Jesus Christ died for you, and yet you despair of His mercy! What an insult you offer to His goodness towards you." The unfortunate man replied in a manner worthy of a demon: "I wish to be damned to displease Jesus Christ." "And I," said the saint, "to please Him, will save you." Turning to those who were around, he asked them all to say the rosary to obtain through the intercession of the Mother of God the conversion of this obstinate sinner. Their prayers were not unheeded. Mary showed her great influence with her divine Son; the heart so hard was softened, and the criminal was perfectly converted. The man so near final impenitence confessed to the saint, and died the death of a holy penitent.

Prayer.

My God, I hope in Thee, though there is nothing in me to merit heaven. I hope in Thee because Thou art my Father and I am Thy child; because Jesus Christ has died for me, and because I offer Thee His merits. For me He offers Thee His pure heart.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

This is something to console souls in spiritual dryness, or when tempted. One purpose of not sinning made during that time is of more value in the scales of God than a thousand acts of virtue made with greatest fervor in a time of consolation.—*John of Avila.*

St. Catharine of Siena, fatigued by horrible temptations, felt herself upon the border of a precipice; she imagined her heart was attached to God by so slight a bond that it was ready to break away entirely. Nevertheless, at that very time she was most pleasing in the eyes of Our Lord.

St. Francis of Sales during a long time suffered violent attacks from a temptation, which made him very unhappy. He wrote to St. Jane Frances as follows: "I am much tempted; I imagine I have not the strength necessary to resist if the occasion presented itself; but the more I

feel my feebleness the more my confidence in God increases, being assured that even in the presence of the objects which tempt me God will give me courage to overcome my enemies."

Prayer.

My God, I will often say, from the bottom of my heart, for all the goods of earth I would not commit the least sin. Death, a thousand deaths, rather than displease Thee.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

The Lord sends temptations for your good. It is a sign that He takes special care of you, and it should be for you a motive to confide in Him.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

A pious person who was almost unceasingly afflicted with great temptations said to an enlightened and experienced priest: "Why does God permit me to be hardly ever without temptation?" The minister of God animated her confidence by speaking of the merciful designs of God in regard to His servants. He explained it in this manner: "According to St. Jerome temptations are useful to try us. In a time of peace we cannot be sure that our fidelity to God is the effect of real virtue; but he who while battling with temptation perseveres, proves clearly that he is faithful to God because he loves Him."

"Temptations are useful for us," says St. Bernard, "to teach us humility." Humility is so necessary, and it attracts so many graces! He who, like St. Paul, is ready to fall at each step, knowing his own weakness, humbles himself and acknowledges the great need he has of God's help, and will not cease to have recourse to Him.

"Temptations are useful to purify us from our imperfections and our faults," said the pious Gerson. "When the sea is agitated by tempests it rejects from its bosom all the impurities it had received." It is the same with him who is tempted; he is cleansed of the sins with which he

was defiled, the punishment he merited for them is remitted, for he has then his purgatory.

"Temptations are necessary to strengthen us," said the Abbé Nil. The more a tree is shaken by the wind the more firmly it is rooted in the ground. The apostle St. Paul begged the Lord to deliver him from the angel of Satan who made him suffer in a manner as perilous as it was humiliating. The Lord replied that virtue was perfected in infirmity.

"Temptations which we resist increase our merit and make us more worthy of a more brilliant crown," said St. Gregory. In a word, they produce in us many acts of virtue which are agreeable to God. St. Dorothy made known to her director that she was besieged by great temptations. He was touched with compassion and said he would ask Our Lord to take them from her. "No, I beg of you ask for me rather the grace to come out victorious from this terrible combat," said she. "These temptations make me suffer, but I know they are for my good; they compel me to have recourse to God by prayer, and make me practise mortification." A holy person having been delivered from a temptation which had long assailed him, complained lovingly to God: "My Lord, am I no longer worthy to suffer, to be afflicted for love of Thee?" St. Ephrem, according to St. John Climacus, being left at peace after having passed through many temptations, begged God to permit him to have still more combats with the enemy of our salvation that he might have still greater reward in heaven by giving greater proofs of his love.

Prayer.

My God, I believe it is for my good that Thou sendest me temptations. Grant that I may enter into Thy designs, and that these temptations serve to humble, purify, and strengthen me, and to increase my merit.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

We must not speak much of temptations, especially of those against purity and faith, nor must we give them too much attention. The demon when tempting some persons knows well that they will not consent; but he hopes that by suggesting evil they will take up arms to defend themselves. This is for him a kind of glory from which he expects to gain an advantage. We must despise the temptation and the tempter by promptly giving our mind to something else without being troubled or distressed.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

This saint said the devil is like a big dog that sees a traveller that he does not know. At first the dog only barks; but should the traveller try to pacify him and give him some bread, he approaches, and will not leave till he gets something else. If the man throws stones and then runs, the dog barks still more and pursues him, because he seems afraid; but if he lets the dog howl without hastening his steps, without showing any fear, or paying any attention to him, he will soon cease his barking and follow him no further. It is thus you must act in temptations, continued the saint. Do not stop to appease or pacify, do not seek to combat them, but having given yourself to God with all your heart, occupy yourself interiorly with other things, act tranquilly as though you were not tempted.

St. Benedict Joseph Labre, knowing that a very virtuous person was violently tempted, said to him: "Although you are afflicted by temptations, fear not; have good courage. God never abandons those who hope in Him. He will not permit those who lean on Him to fall."

Prayer.

My God, permit me not to fall under temptations. In temptations I will not be troubled, I will hope in Thee because Thou art my strength.

THIRTIETH DAY.

Temptations are beneficial to you if you resist them from the commencement, if you have recourse to God with much confidence and humility.—*St. Jerome.*

He who does not combat the temptation is already half vanquished, if not entirely, said this Father. It is with a temptation as with a spark of fire: if it falls upon the clothing, it is easy to extinguish it, to prevent it from doing much harm; but if one does not immediately take means to arrest its progress, what disastrous consequences will follow !

“In temptation we must have recourse to God, throwing ourselves into His arms, upon His breast, acting,” says the Abbé John, “as a man would who, being under a great tree, sees coming towards him several wild beasts; he mounts the tree to place himself in a secure place. We must reflect upon what the Scripture says, that God is always at our side to help us.” “We must consider,” says St. Augustin, “that Our Lord sees us, and watches the manner in which we fight.” When this saint was tempted he humbled himself before God, saying, “Lord, I am but dust and am weak; if Thou dost not protect me and take me under the shadow of Thy wing, the birds of prey will devour me.” Again he imagined he saw Our Lord exhorting him to have courage, extending one hand to help him, and holding in the other a brilliant crown to recompense him if he was victorious.

Prayer.

My God, when I am tempted I will throw myself with confidence into Thy arms, I will say with love, My tender Father, have pity, save me, or I shall perish.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

If a temptation last a long time it would be well to make it known to your confessor; at the same time look lovingly to the Lord as your Father.—*Father Cagliari.*

St. Jane Frances being violently tempted, and in great trouble of mind, made known to St. Francis of Sales, her director, her condition in these words: "My Father, I am oppressed with horrible temptations, and extremely afflicted in mind. I find no remedy but unceasingly to cast loving glances upon God, abandoning myself entirely to Him. Although I do not feel that perfect resignation, that sweet confidence, that horror of evil I formerly felt, I think, nevertheless, those same virtues have become more solid, firmer than before. When I endeavor to fortify myself by reasoning, renouncement, or other acts, I only expose myself to new temptations, to new pains; while if I but fix my eyes upon my Saviour, I feel less agitated, less troubled."

Prayer.

My God, if Thou permittest the enemy of my salvation to assail me, permit him not to be victorious. O my tender Father, I love Thee, I will never cease to love Thee!

NOVEMBER.

Charity.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. This is the greatest and the first commandment, and the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—ST. MATT. XXII. 38.

FIRST DAY.

O my Saviour and my God, was it necessary that Thou shouldst make it a precept to be loved? Art Thou not amiable on account of Thy perfections, and dost Thou not deserve all our love for the infinite love Thou hast for us? If any one does not love Thee, he is not worthy to know Thee. A soul that knows God must love Him, and love Him more and more as he knows Him better.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Philip Neri often said: "Lord, I do not love Thee, because I do not know Thee."

A great servant of God, who was burning with love for Him, suffered a kind of martyrdom during the carnival time in seeing so many Christians rejoicing when God was so much offended. He exclaimed: "Love is not loved, Love is not loved. He is not loved because He is not known."

A person of great piety thus made known to her director the sentiments of her soul. "A great fire is enkindled in my soul when Our Saviour makes known to me in prayer how much He deserves to be loved on account of the great love He has for us. He loves us first with the same love that He has for Himself, because of the grand things He

has done for us and continues to do; secondly, because of the great desire He has for our love—so great that it is called the *folly of love*. Alas! He asks to be known only that He may be loved, and He finds no access to our hearts because they are not well disposed; thirdly, because of the patience with which He bears the ingratitude of so many creatures who will not correspond to the great love He has for them. He follows them continually, to be loved, and they fly that they may not be loved. When I reflect on this I am penetrated with astonishment. A God who gave these creatures a heart to love can suffer them to love Him not, can love to such an excess creatures so vile! I am sometimes filled with sentiments of love; I would wish for the heart of a seraph to love my God. Sometimes I feel afflicted when thinking of the many who love not God, and of the time when I loved Him not. My pain increases when I consider that not to love God is to despise His power, His wisdom, His charity, His goodness, all His perfections, all the mysteries of Jesus Christ; I then beg the infinite goodness of God to make Himself known that He may be loved. I offer myself to Him with all my heart to enkindle in all hearts the fire of His love. These are the sentiments which animate me in prayer, and I endeavor to entertain them during the day."

Prayer.

O my God, how can we find pleasure in doing what offends Thee? Give me the heart of an angel that I may love Thee and cause Thee to be loved. Make use of me to enkindle the fire of Thy love in all hearts.

SECOND DAY.

When one has placed his whole heart in God, there is no more affection for earthly things. The grandeur of honors, the distinction of riches do not attract it any more; it finds its only consolation, its only safety in God.—*St. Teresa.*

When St. Bernard found any pleasure in created things, he was in confusion, and humbled himself, saying: "The-

love which I have for God is not very ardent; if it were, I would enjoy nothing outside of Him."

St. Catharine of Genoa, full of love for God, cried out: "No, no more attachment for the world; no more affection for all that the world loves. If I were mistress of a thousand worlds, I would renounce them all that God might be the master of my heart."

There was nothing in the heart of St. Ignatius Loyola but God, the desire to please Him, and to gain souls to Him.

It is said in the Life of Father Peter John Cayron that this holy religious had no other passion than the love of God, and to see Him loved by his neighbor.

Prayer.

O my God, I return Thee my heart; it belongs to Thee. Grant that it may never be attached to things of earth; that I find no pleasure but in Thee.

THIRD DAY.

Alas! we have not the love we should have; I mean that we have need of an infinite love in order to love God as He merits; nevertheless, unfortunate that we are, we lavish the little love of which we are capable on things miserable and vile, as if we had it to squander.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This great saint thus expressed himself: "If I knew there was in my soul only one thread of affection which was not of God or for God, I would cut it this moment. I would much rather cease to exist than to exist and not belong to God without any reserve."

St. Philip Neri sometimes said: "How is it possible that he who believes in God can love anything but God, except it be for the love of God?" Languishing with love for God, he thus addressed Him: "O my God, Thou art so lovely, yet Thou commandest me to love Thee! Why hast Thou given me but one heart, and that heart so small a one?"

St. Augustin, animated with love, spoke thus to his soul:

“What is there in this world that can please thee, that has a right to thy love? Turn which way thou wilt, thou wilt see but earth and sky; if in the heavens and on the earth thou findest things worthy of thy love, of what love is He not worthy Who made all this? Ask of these things which please thee so much who is their author, and in admiring the work, love the One Who made them all. Do not place your affections on things created, and forget God Who is the Creator. O my God, Thou art worthy to be loved infinitely more than all that is on the earth or in the heavens. I renounce all that is perishable lest I lose Thy love.”

Prayer.

O my God, if I had a thousand hearts I would give them all to Thee. Why hast Thou given me a heart which cannot love Thee as Thou deservest to be loved, which can attach itself to vanity? Deign to fill with Thy love this heart which desires to be all Thine.

FOURTH DAY.

It suffices for a soul that loves God as it ought to love Him to know that a thing is right, is for God's glory, to do it immediately, without hesitation, with a desire to please God, and to show Him its love. O my God, how easy Thou makest the most difficult things to those who love Thee ardently, and who abandon all for Thy love!—*St. Teresa.*

This saint ardently desired a reform in her rule in order to be more detached from all things and to follow more perfectly her vocation. Nevertheless, she desired it in such a spirit that if the Lord had made her understand that He wished her to abandon the undertaking entirely, she would have done so instantly without any pain. It was to put in execution this great desire which burned within her, namely, to do only what is most pleasing to God, that impelled her to make a vow to do always that which she knew to be the most perfect. For many it might be rash to make such

a vow ; but in doing this, St. Teresa felt that God asked it of her. She never failed in one point to keep her vow.

The Church, in the prayers in which she invokes St. Ignatius Loyola, makes us understand that the true and distinctive character of this saint was to do all for the greater glory of God, and that God chose him to propagate this grand design.

What excess of humiliations and austerities, what fatigues and dangers did not St. Joseph Labre undergo to please God, because he knew that God asked it of him ! This thought, *God wills it*, smoothed all difficulties, and made easy to him what would otherwise have been most painful. He encouraged himself by frequently pronouncing these words, *God wills it*, which became his motto.

Prayer.

My God, I will do for Thy love that which will be most perfect, all that I know will be most agreeable to Thee. I will do nothing but for Thy glory.

FIFTH DAY.

When the love of God takes possession of a soul, it produces an insatiable desire to work for Him Whom it loves. No matter what it does for God, nor how much time it gives to His service, it seems as nothing, and it only laments that it can do so little for Him. Love teaches what God deserves. By the light of this flame the soul sees all the defects, all the imperfections of its works; penetrated with confusion, it feels how unworthy of so great a God it is to work so imperfectly. In this light it cannot overestimate itself, nor find fault with others.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

St. Vincent de Paul, who never ceased to do great things for God that he might please Him, always looked upon himself not only as useless and idle, but as a wicked servant. Sometimes when he recollected those words of the Apostle, though they certainly did not apply to him, "Let him who does not work, not eat," he deprived himself of his meal at midday, going until night without nourishment.

St. Charles Borromeo had a great desire to see God honored, and seized every opportunity to procure for Him true adorers. To succeed in this to what laborious undertakings did he not give himself ! A change from one hard labor to another was his only relaxation ; nevertheless, he spoke as if he did nothing, that he deserved, like the idle steward, to be condemned to eternal darkness.

Prayer.

O my God, what an indignity not always to labor for Thee, and in the most perfect manner ! Alas ! in all my works there are faults ; have pity on this useless servant, who will commence now to serve Thee.

SIXTH DAY.

He who has arrived at a perfect love of God feels neither glory nor disgrace ; he has only contempt for temptations and sufferings, He loses taste for everything but God. Finding no strength, no consolation, no repose in anything but God, he seeks only his Beloved. Whether he works or eats, whether he sleeps or wakes, whether he converses or is silent, all his thought, all his ambition is to find Him Whom he loves. God is his treasure, in Him is his heart. In a word, he may be compared to a man violently enamored, who can only live near the creature who is the object of his passion.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

Where are you going, whom do you seek ? asked some one of a holy religious. “ I am going to God ; it is God Whom I seek,” replied he, “ and I will not stop until I have found Him.”

The blessed Raymond Lullus was asked these questions : “ To whom do you belong ? From whence do you come ? Where do you go ? Who brought you here ? ” He replied : “ I belong to Love, I come from Love, I am going to Love, it is Love which has conducted me here.”

St. Vincent Ferrer's heart and mind were always full of God ; he thought always of God, he spoke always of God or to God ; in walking or sitting, studying or conversing,

it was easily seen that he was with God, that he united himself closely to Him.

The ardor of divine love produced in St. Louis of Gonzaga, St. Catharine of Siena, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Teresa, St. Philip Neri, St. Magdalene of Pazzi, St. Francis of Paula, and many others, works so wonderful that they would seem incredible if we were to relate them.

An ambassador of St. Louis, King of France, met a woman in Ptolemaide walking through the streets of the city carrying in her right hand a pitcher of water, in her left a lighted torch, who was crying, "O God, O God, is it possible?" The ambassador stopped her and asked what she meant by this. "I would, if it were the pleasure of God," said she, "extinguish hell with this water and burn paradise with this torch, so that God might be loved purely for Himself."

A religious was accustomed to say, when asked the time of day, "It is the time to love God."

Prayer.

Lord, I would sigh only for Thee. Grant that I may see but Thee, that I may feel but Thee, taste but Thee, think but of Thee, speak and work but for Thee. Thou art my treasure, let my heart repose only in Thee.

SEVENTH DAY.

The perfect love of God does not consist in those sentiments of devotion which we sometimes so much desire, but in a strong determination to avoid the least sin, and to take every means for this, with an ardent desire to please God in all things and to procure His glory.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Jane Frances wrote to the Superior of a religious whom every one regarded as a soul full of the love of God because she experienced extraordinary spiritual consolations: "This good girl ought to be undeceived; she persuades herself that she is much elevated in the love of God, and it is thought she is sublimely virtuous. I am of the

opinion that these heats, these attacks she feels are from nature and self-love. You must tell her that the solidity of the love of God does not consist in tasting divine consolations, but in being very exact in observing her rule, in practising faithfully true virtues; namely, to be humble, to love to be despised, to be detached from self, and to love God in such a manner as to desire to be known to none but God alone. These are the infallible marks of true love. God preserve us from that sensible love which makes us think of ourselves alone, because it leads to death."

It is said of St. Thomas Aquinas that he preserved his soul as pure and clean as a child of five years:—he possessed perfect love.

Prayer.

My God, I love Thee. It is because I love Thee that I will do nothing to displease Thee, and do all things to please Thee and to cause others to love Thee.

EIGHTH DAY.

The love of God is the tree of life placed in the centre of this earthly paradise; it has, like all trees, six different properties, namely, the root, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the flowers, and the fruit. Let us keep this tree in our hearts, flourishing in every part.—*St. Teresa.*

This saint describes this tree in an instructive and interesting manner. The roots are the virtues by means of which we acquire this love. There are nine principal ones: first, true penance and the frequent use of the sacraments; second, the observance of the commandments and our rules; third, the fear of God; fourth, mortification of the passions and desires; fifth, fear of occasion of sin; sixth, examination of conscience; seventh, obedience; eighth, humility; ninth, mercy towards our neighbor.

The trunk of the tree is conformity to the will of God. The different branches are: first, a lively faith, which makes us see clearly that all that happens is from God;

second, a great confidence in the protection of God, which sustains us in the midst of adversities; third, ardent desires, firm purposes, and other interior acts, which is the road that leads to true love; fourth, constancy, which keeps us always reposing under this tree.

The leaves are graces given us for the salvation of others, interior consolations and delights. We give these the name of leaves, as they serve to ornament the tree, and cover the fruit in its season. In the winter of dryness and desolation these leaves fall, we feel no spiritual joy, but the love of God remains planted in the heart.

The flowers are the works, the heroic virtues which the soul inflamed with love produces.

The fruit is the pains, the afflictions, the persecutions which the soul supports with patience when God permits that she should be assailed, or that she sometimes imposes on herself in order to better serve God and to suffer in imitation of Jesus Christ. Such is the tree which St. Teresa invites us to plant in our hearts.

A holy religious compared the love of God to a beautiful plant placed in a good soil, and most luxuriant in flowers and the fruit of good works. "One of the principal fruits is the love of our neighbor."

Prayer.

My God, implant firmly in my heart Thy divine love. Let not this love be sterile: let it produce in time the fruits of eternal life.

NINTH DAY.

There are some who torment themselves in seeking the art to love God; they do not know that there is no other art, no other means but to love Him, that is, to do what is most pleasing to Him.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

It was by an admirable exactitude in observing the law of God that St. Vincent de Paul arrived at so great a love. He watched continually over himself. He was mortified

in his passions, just in his judgments, circumspect in his words, prudent in his conduct, punctual in his practices of piety, and perfectly united to God. We might say that his life was a continual sacrifice to God, not only of the goods of this world, but also of all he had received from the generous hand of God, of all his enlightenments, his affections, his desires. He desired nothing but that God might be perfectly known and glorified, and that His will be accomplished at all times, in all places, and by all kinds of persons. To this end alone he directed all his designs, all his words, and all the actions he performed.

Prayer.

My God, I will not cease to do, for love of Thee, all that I know to be agreeable to Thee. I wish to be always united with Thee in heart and mind, that I may always act for Thy glory.

TENTH DAY.

A person acquires the love of God by firmly resolving to do and to suffer for God, and to refrain from all that displeases Him; putting in practice this resolution in the different circumstances which present themselves, being very faithful in little things, in order to be better able to accomplish great ones.—*St. Teresa.*

This saint, who was much opposed in the different foundations she made, was not discouraged; she rejoiced to have much to suffer. She always took counsel of wise persons, did nothing contrary to obedience, saying she would leave the foundation of a thousand monasteries rather than commit the least imperfection.

St. Vincent de Paul by wounding charity and simplicity a little might have silenced many an insult and reproach, but refused to do so; during the time he had most to suffer he gave no signs of impatience, working always with greatest sweetness and perfect tranquillity.

The Empress Eudoxie asked of St. John Chrysostom a certain permission to heretics which he could not con-

scientiously grant, and he boldly refused. The princess, angry at his refusal, sent her ministers to threaten him with exile and death if he did not obey. "Go tell the empress," he replied, "that Chrysostom fears but one thing—that is sin."

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may fear sin alone. Give me a disposition to refrain from everything that displeases Thee, to work always for Thee, to suffer for love of Thee.

ELEVENTH DAY.

An excellent means to exercise ourselves in the love of Jesus Christ is to accustom ourselves to have Him always present to our mind. Here are three ways of doing it: first, when you are about to perform any action, represent to yourself the manner in which Our Lord Jesus Christ lived when He was on the earth visibly; endeavor to have the same intentions He had, and to enter into His dispositions, with a desire to imitate Him; second, think that He sees you from on high, and that He pours on you the abundance of His graces; third, with all persons with whom you may find yourself, let your faith see in them Jesus Christ Himself. In doing this we perform every action with much more facility and more perfection, we avoid many faults, such as inquietude and impatience; still more, in doing a service to our neighbor we will have as much merit as if we did the same service to Our Lord.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

The saint practised the counsel he gave. He undertook nothing, did nothing without first thinking of Jesus Christ, endeavoring to imitate the manner in which He spoke and acted; consequently he edified all who saw him. During the time he lived with M. de Gondi, he honored Our Saviour in his person, the Blessed Virgin in his wife, the apostles in the priests whom he met there, and the disciples in all other persons. This practice, he said, was of much benefit to him.

A person who wished to think unceasingly of Jesus Christ formed the habit of seeing Jesus Christ in those who had authority over him. Jesus Christ priest in the

priests, Jesus Christ poor in the poor, Jesus Christ suffering in those who were afflicted, Jesus Christ an infant in children. In fine, everything recalled to him Jesus Christ. On beholding the sun, he would say, "Jesus Christ is the sun of justice;" on seeing a lighted torch, "Jesus Christ is the light of the world;" a lamb, "Jesus Christ is the lamb of God, Who effaces sin;" on seeing bread, "Jesus Christ is the living bread descended from heaven;" a book, "Jesus Christ is the book of the just."

Prayer.

O my Saviour, be forever in my thoughts by the recollection of Thy perfections, of Thy mysteries, and of Thy love. Be always in my heart by holy affections, and by a desire to please Thee. Let me speak Thy language, live Thy life.

TWELFTH DAY.

Would you know the extent of your love for God? Examine your desire for sufferings and humiliations. A soul grows in divine love in proportion as it desires to suffer and be humbled. These are the certain marks of this heavenly fire; all the rest is but smoke.
—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. John of the Cross asked of Our Saviour as a recompense for the pains and persecutions he had endured that he might suffer still more, be humbled more and more, *To suffer and be despised for Thee*, said he.

St. Matilda, hearing these words of the Gospel, *Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?* was like one ravished with joy. In her ecstasy she seemed to hear Jesus Christ say: "Matilda, lovest thou Me more than all in the world?" She replied: "Thou knowest, Lord, that I love Thee." Our Saviour continued: "Lovest thou Me enough to suffer pains, torments, and humiliations?" She replied: "Thou knowest there is no cross that can separate me from Thee." "But," said Our Lord still further, "if thy torments were frightful, wouldst thou suffer them

with joy for love of Me?" "Yes, my God, I am ready. I will think myself happy to have something to suffer for Thee, Who hast suffered for me. All will seem light when I think that Thou for love of me hast become a Man of sorrows."

St. Benedict Joseph Labre showed clearly by his conduct that he was burning with the desire to suffer and to be humbled; his great love for Jesus Christ gave him this ardent desire. One of his ejaculatory prayers was: "O Jesus, my Love, I give Thee my heart! O Saviour, infinitely amiable, place in my heart Thy Passion."

Prayer.

My God, give me a love and a desire for suffering, for humiliation; permit no cross to separate me from Thee. Implant in my heart the Passion of Jesus Christ, that I may think it a happiness to suffer for Him.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

The less desires we have, the more charity we possess. He who no longer feels within himself a desire for anything possesses the most perfect charity.—*St. Augustin.*

St. Francis of Sales said sometimes to those few persons with whom he ever spoke of his interior dispositions: "I wish for very few things, and I wish very little for those few. I have scarcely a desire for anything, and if I could be born again, I would wish to have none whatever."

St. Teresa was so certain that perfect love excluded all earthly desires, that she exclaimed: "O God, my Love, Thou lovest me more than I can love myself, more than I can understand; why should I desire more than Thou wouldst give me?"

A director of souls gave this advice to one who asked him for direction: "Keep this in mind, never let these words, *I will, I will not, I should like*, escape your lips, nor let the sentiments these words express find a place in your heart."

Prayer.

My God, I do not desire riches, or honors, or pleasures in this world. I do not desire the esteem of creatures, or life, or health. I desire nothing of earth. I desire only the accomplishment of Thy will.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

According to the love we bear our neighbor, we know if we love God. These two loves are never separated one from the other. As we advance in one, we make progress in the other. This rule is certain. Examine your love for God; if it be perfect, so is that of your neighbor. But be not of those who say they will do much for their neighbor and never put their hand to the work.—*St. Teresa.*

Tertullian relates of the first Christians that they loved one another so perfectly that the pagans were in admiration, and said: "Consider how the Christians love one another, how they respect one another, how attentive to do a service for each other, even to die one for the other."

St. John the Evangelist, according to St. Jerome, in his old age, being no longer able to walk, was carried in the arms of the disciples to the assemblies of the Christians, and from the weakness of his voice he could not make long discourses. He contented himself with saying: "My little children, love one another." Some wearied, perhaps, at hearing the same words, murmured, saying: "Why do you always give us this advice?" He made this reply, so worthy of him: "It is the precept of the Saviour; if you observe it, it is enough."

St. Jane Frances, desiring that all the actions of her daughters might proceed from a spirit of charity, had written upon the walls of the halls through which they most frequently passed the qualities which St. Paul gives to this sublime virtue: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not; dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger; thinketh

no evil." If it happened that one of her spiritual daughters failed in charity, she sent her to read this sentence, which she called the *mirror of the monastery*. She often read it herself in their presence, then turning to them with face burning with love, she would say: "If I would speak with the tongue of an angel, and have not charity, I am nothing; if I would give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Prayer.

Lord, I will love my neighbor for Thee, because he comes from Thee; he belongs to Thee. I will always see Thee in him, pray for him, do for him all the good I can for love of Thee.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

He Who has commanded us to love our neighbor has also told us the manner in which we should love him. We must love him as ourselves. This is the rule; we cannot transgress it without being guilty. It is so essential to love our neighbor in this manner, that in loving him in any other way different from this we do not love him sufficiently. — *St. Francis of Sales.*

The holy king Wenceslaus employed a great part of his wealth in buying the children of pagan parents, and had them baptized and brought up in the Catholic faith.

A good Christian was accustomed to say thus to himself when a beggar asked an alms, or any one begged a favor of him, "If I was in this person's place and he in mine, what would I wish him to do? Let me do it, then, for the love of Jesus Christ."

A worthy bishop one day had a gentleman of great distinction dining with him who spoke very uncharitably of an absent person. In order to give him a salutary lesson the bishop sent one of his servants for the man whose reputation he was destroying. The detractor was surprised to hear him give this order. "I have sent for him," said the

bishop, "that he may answer your charges ; it would be unjust to condemn him without hearing what he has to say."

Prayer.

My God, grant that for love of Thee I may do to all in misfortune as I would wish them to do in my regard if I were in their place and they in mine.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Charity to our neighbor is a sign of predestination, because it shows we are true disciples of Jesus Christ. This divine virtue it was which caused Jesus Christ to lead a life of poverty and to die naked on a cross. For this reason whenever we find an occasion to do something for charity we should thank God.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

There was at one time a very learned man named Eulogius whose delight was the study of the sciences. God touched his heart with grace so that he saw the nothingness of all earthly pursuits, and resolved to consecrate himself entirely to the service of God. He distributed all he possessed to the poor, and then asked of Our Lord what manner of life He wished him to embrace. Our Lord made known to him his work. One day, when finding himself in a public street, he saw a leper without hands or feet. Touched with compassion, he promised Our Lord that he would take care of him, and provide all that was necessary for him during the rest of his life, hoping by so doing to obtain mercy from God for himself. He took him to his home, and for fifteen years devoted himself to his service. After these years had passed the leper, who was at first penetrated with thankfulness, became ungrateful. He reproached his benefactor in the vilest manner, saying, "You must have committed a great number of terrible crimes, since you are condemned to such a penance. I will no longer stay with you, bring me to the place in which you found me. The generosity of the rich will furnish enough for my wants, besides, I shall see those who pass by." Eulogius suffered much in hearing all this; but far from becoming impatient, he redoubled his care

and begged Our Saviour to change the heart of the poor leper who had become dear to him. Never did miser fear more to lose his treasures than did Eulogius fear to be separated from his leper. At last it occurred to him to take him to St. Antony for advice. St. Antony showed the poor man how Providence had cared for him, how blind he had been not to see all God had done for him, and also the unworthiness of his conduct. He told them that this had been a temptation, and that they had but a short time to live. "You have but a short time to bear patiently with each other," he said to them. "Would you, for the forty days you still have to live on this earth, be separated and lose the crown which awaits you?" At these words the leper was tempted no more. Eulogius was comforted; they returned together to their home, ceasing not to bless God. When the time arrived, the prophecy of the saint was fulfilled. Both died the same day, Eulogius departing first. What an abundant reward was before him!

Prayer.

My God, it is for Thee that I will do all the services I can for my neighbor. I will think myself happy to suffer something for him.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Jesus Christ so loved our neighbor as to give His life for him. Our Saviour rejoices when we sacrifice ourselves to do him good. Everything we do for our neighbor to please God, to show our love for Him, is most agreeable to Him. Oh, if we understood well of what importance is the virtue of charity to our neighbor, with what zeal would we not perform acts of this virtue!—*St. Teresa.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi was accustomed to say that she considered as lost the day in which she did not exercise some charity for her neighbor.

St. Vincent de Paul lived but for this. He never lost an opportunity for practising this virtue.

A young woman, who had always led an innocent life,

resolved to show her love for Jesus Christ by doing something for the poor. She was not rich, consequently could not give much alms. She therefore volunteered to mend their clothes, and for many years this was her occupation. Being one day alone on a road, she met a poor person whom she had never before seen. "Miss," said he, "I have some news to tell you; bless the Lord, for you will die in six days." These words, far from troubling her or making her sad, gave her delight. She hastened home to tell what she had heard, but they persuaded her to pay no attention to it. "I lose nothing," said she, "in preparing for death, besides I think it is a warning from on high, and I bless God." She made all her preparations, certain that it was Jesus Christ who had spoken in this poor person. After six days had passed she died in sentiments of great piety, rejoicing that she had loved the poor.

Prayer.

My God, give me a great love for the poor, a love that will make me see Jesus Christ in them, and inspire me to do all in my power for them.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

Oh, how great was the love Jesus Christ had for the poor! He chose the state of poverty, He is the Father of the poor, He considers as done for Himself what is done for them. It is proper, then, to love the poor with a special love, seeing in them the person of Jesus Christ, and doing all for them as if done for Him.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint, of whom it might be said that he carried the poor in his heart, upon hearing the news of a threatened famine, sighed deeply, saying: "Whenever I think of this I am afflicted; it is not for our society, but for the poor. We can go out of our house and ask for bread; if they do not give it to us we can work in the parishes; but the poor—what will they do? where will they go?"

M. Denysiot, a worthy priest of the diocese of Autun,

upon the occasion of a famine deprived himself of all but the barest necessities in order to help the poor of his parish. His one meal in the day consisted of some vegetables, cooked in salt and water, and rye bread. He was the father of the indigent. Whenever he spoke of love for the poor, his words were so efficacious that they opened the hearts and purses of the people. His charity was so ingenious that he had in his house a kind of store where he kept clothes for men, women, and children, that he might clothe them, and also give them bread, when out of work. His delight was to visit the prisons, to comfort those imprisoned there, to console the poor in the hospitals, and give them all the spiritual and corporal succor the great charity of his heart felt for them. He desired to spend his life with them.

Prayer.

O my Saviour, Who wouldst be poor, and Who lovest the poor so much that Thou wilt reward whatever is done for them as if done for Thee, give me a great love for the poor, and grant that it be not a love without deeds.

NINETEENTH DAY.

It is a work most agreeable to Our Saviour to visit the sick and infirm, and to comfort them, as He Himself recommended this kind of mercy. But to perform it with greater zeal and merit, you must see Jesus Christ in the person of the sick, for Jesus Christ says He will regard as done to Him what we do for the poor and infirm.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

St. Magdalene of Pazzi showed an inexpressible charity towards all the sick and weak in her monastery. She served them as well as she possibly could, solely for the love of God, looking upon them sometimes as temples of the Holy Ghost, sometimes as sisters of the angels, sometimes as Jesus Christ Himself.

St. Louis, King of France, served the poor upon his knees, with head uncovered. He saw in them members of

Jesus Christ, united in their sufferings with their Chief, and nailed like Him to the cross.

St. John Berchmans found an inexpressible satisfaction in being with the sick. He had the gift of making them esteem and love their condition. It was his custom to read for them something pious, and to speak to them on subjects that might animate their devotion towards Mary, the consoler of the afflicted.

Prayer.

My God, inspire me with what to say to the sick, the poor, and all who are afflicted, that they may better love the state in which they are placed.

TWENTIETH DAY.

To have for our neighbor the love that Our Saviour commands, our hearts must be good, charitable, complacent, even at a time when we feel towards him a repugnance on account of some natural or moral defect. To love thus is to love for God's sake. The maxim of the saints was, that in loving and doing good we must never consider the person to whom we do the service but Him for Whom it is performed.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Jane Frances had a singular affection for those in whom she saw some faults, or who had given her cause to suffer. "It is well that we have something to suffer," she said. "Our Saviour has given us a fundamental law that we bear with our neighbor; but if our neighbor has no fault, or if he does us no wrong, in what can we bear with him?" She wrote as follows to a religious of her Order who felt great difficulty in bearing with the faults of another in the house: "My daughter, often reflect on these words of the Gospel: *Jesus Christ has loved us and washed us in His blood.* Notice, that He did not wait to purify us from our sins to love us, but He loved us while we were yet vile and stained with sin; it was after He had loved us that He purified us. Let us love our neighbor, full of faults though he be, and since it is impossible to wash his imper-

fections away in our blood, let us wish to give the last drop for that end."

Prayer.

My God, give me a heart full of charity and kindness for my neighbor. It is for Thee I will love him. It is Thou I will see in his person. Let me not forget it is an essential law to bear with our neighbor.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Let us be careful not to complain or speak ill of those who are dissatisfied with us, who have no affection for us, who oppose our undertakings, who even persecute us, say injurious things of us, do us harm, calumniate us. Let us treat them with cordiality, showing that we esteem them, speaking always well of them, doing them a service; to save their honor let us even bear confusion and contempt if necessary.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Through envy there were some who were opposed to the spiritual exercises St. Vincent wished to give those who aspired to the priesthood. To a missionary with whom he was speaking of this, he said: "This function excites their emulation more than their envy. Their intention is right, therefore let us not cease to respect and esteem them. We should even think we are unworthy of such an employment, and be persuaded that they would acquit themselves better than we. Let us profit by what is said to serve God with all our heart, and give ourselves entirely to Him."

Prayer.

My God, I will never complain nor speak evil of any one. I will look upon my enemies as benefactors, as they give me an occasion to merit grace and heaven.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

We should love our enemies and show them our love: first, by overcoming evil with good, as the Apostle says; secondly, because those who oppose us are rather our friends than our adversaries, for they help to destroy our self-love, which is our greatest enemy.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Some one said to St. Francis of Sales that what he found most difficult in Christianity was to love our enemies. St. Francis replied: "I do not know of what material my heart is, or if God through His love has given me a heart different from many, as the accomplishment of this precept is easy to me. I acknowledge even that if God had forbidden me to love my enemies it would be difficult to obey." The following proves that he felt as he spoke:

There lived in Annecy a lawyer who hated the holy prelate without any reason. He used every occasion to turn him into ridicule, to calumniate him, to show his hatred in every way. The saint, who was aware of this, meeting the man one day, spoke kindly to him, took him by the hand, and endeavored to conciliate him. Seeing his words had no effect, he said: "I perceive that you hate me, that you are illy-disposed towards me, yet be assured that even if you deprived me of one eye I would look upon you as a friend with the other." Astonishing words! yet they did not soften the man. He made several attempts to kill the saint, firing at him through the windows of the episcopal residence. He even made an attempt to shoot him in the street, the ball missing the saint, but striking the priest who accompanied him. When the senate of Chambéry heard of this, the man was imprisoned and condemned to death. The saint did all in his power to change the sentence, but all he could do was to have it deferred, his intention being to interest the sovereign, through friends whom he knew had influence with him. His petition was granted, and he hastened to the prison, doubting not that he would gain the heart of his

enemy. He informed him of the favor he had obtained and begged him to forget forever his sentiments of hatred. Incredible to relate, instead of tears of repentance and gratitude, he received insult and abuse. The man became still more furious when he saw the saint, his benefactor, on his knees before him, begging his pardon as if he had been the criminal. At length, despairing of doing him any good, St. Francis left him; handing him the paper containing his pardon, he said: "I have saved you from the hands of justice, but if you are not converted, you will fall into the hands of God's justice, from which no one can save you." These words were prophetic. The monster soon after perished miserably.

A good religious, full of true charity, was in the habit of going to the Blessed Sacrament whenever she received a mortification from any one, and saying to Our Lord: "O my Saviour, I forgive him with all my heart, for love of Thee. I beg Thou wilt pardon all his sins through Thy love for me."

Prayer.

My God, I love my neighbor because Thou lovest him. I desire that he love Thee. I will neglect nothing to help him to love Thee.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

We must be full of compassion for sinners. He who has no compassion for them, and has no charity in their regard, does not deserve that God will have mercy upon him.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint was never surprised at the faults into which people fell. "It belongs to man to sin," he said, "because he was conceived and born in sin." This knowledge of the great misery of man made him compassionate to sinners and full of sweetness in trying to convert them.

St. Francis of Sales had so great a tenderness for sinners that he sometimes said: "I love wicked men, God alone

loves them more than I." He sought every occasion to convert them, and it was for him a source of joy when they came to his feet to confess their iniquities. He wept over them, touched at the deplorable state of their souls. Rarely could they resist his exhortations, accompanied as they were with that unction of grace which his fervent prayers drew down upon them.

A great sinner, who was confessing his sins as if it were a history he was relating, was surprised to see the saint weeping. "Why do you weep, Father?" he asked. "I weep because you do not," replied the saint. Those words, accompanied by so much fatherly love, touched the heart of the sinner, and sentiments of contrition penetrated his soul.

Prayer.

My God, give me a great love for sinners. It is to call sinners that Our Saviour came. Can I not love those whom He loved? Give me a love for them, that I may be full of zeal for their conversion.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Among those whom we understand by our neighbor, there is none who deserve this title more than our servants. They are nearer to us, living under the same roof, eating the same bread; they should be the principal objects of our love. Let us practise towards them all the acts of true charity. This should not be founded on the claims of flesh and blood, nor personal qualities, but should be all for God.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

It is to be desired that every Christian woman would copy the admirable manner in which a certain woman conducted herself towards her husband, children, and servants. Solidly virtuous, there was nothing austere in her piety, nothing repelling, nothing but what was gracious. The end she proposed in all she did and said was to make virtue loved and practised for the love of Our Saviour, Who was the God of her heart. She never ceased to offer her family to God through the Blessed Virgin, to whom she had great

devotion. To her husband she would say: "We have a great responsibility. It is in laboring for the salvation of those confided to us that we are securing our own salvation. We must give them good example and pray much for them." At the hour fixed for rising, she went herself to awaken them. "Let us bless God, my children; give your heart to God, Who is your Father; arise with modesty, pronounce the holy names of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, take holy water religiously, kneel down and adore your Creator." She then said morning prayers with them and all the domestics. After the prayers, she read for them a short meditation, to teach them to reflect upon the great truths of salvation. They offered their work for the day to God, desiring to walk in His presence always. She frequently said to her children that though she loved them much, she would rather hear of their death than to know they had committed a mortal sin. There was a time in the day for catechism, another for the beads, and another for spiritual reading—an excellent practice to feed our souls with heavenly nourishment, with thoughts of God, in place of vain, empty, and useless reading. Would that God was as well served by all Christian mothers!

Prayer.

My God, fill me with a holy zeal for the sanctification of those committed to my care. I will teach them their duty if Thou wilt help me. Grant that I may set them a good example and cease not to pray for them.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

God gives to some persons a certain union of heart with their neighbor and a tender love for them. It is one of the grandest and most excellent gifts the Divine Goodness can give to man.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint had received this precious gift. Speaking to one of his intimate friends, he said: "I believe there is not in the world a soul which loves more cordially, more

tenderly, more fondly, than I. It has pleased God to fashion my heart in this manner."

The holy priest Bernard possessed a tender love for his neighbor, which animated him with a great zeal for his salvation. Whenever he saw approaching him some one who wished to speak to him, he begged Our Lord interiorly to instruct him what he should say for that person's sanctification. Then he spoke with such effusion of heart, such overflowing of love, that he would be very hard of heart who could resist his touching words.

A virtuous Christian, who desired to make frequent acts of love for his neighbor, never saluted any person without at the same time saluting his guardian angel, begging this celestial spirit to guard, protect, and guide him.

Prayer.

My God, give me a great love for my neighbor; let me always desire his salvation, and beg his angel to protect him.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

True love, which alone is meritorious and durable, comes from a charity which makes us love our neighbor in God and for God; that is, because God wills that we love Him, and because our neighbor is dear to God, or because God is in him. It is not wrong to love him for other honorable motives, because he has done us some good, or because we see beautiful qualities in him, if at the same time we love him more for God than for these human motives. Nevertheless, the less we love him for these natural qualities, the more our love is pure and perfect. This pure love does not prevent us from loving certain persons more than others, such as our relations, our benefactors, or those who are virtuous, when this preference comes from their closer resemblance to God, or because God wills it. Oh, how rare is this kind of love!—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint always considered God in his neighbor, and his neighbor in God. Hence the respect and love he showed to all, the civility in all his actions. It might be said that his courtesy to all was an act of religion. He wrote as

follows to the Superior of a convent: "Hold yourself well-balanced with your daughters, lest you might distribute your affections or favors according to their natural qualities. How many there are who are not to our taste who are agreeable to God! Charity considers true virtue and the beauty of the soul, and diffuses itself over all without partiality."

One of the principal virtues of St. Vincent de Paul was to see only God in men, and in them to honor His divine perfections. These considerations excited in his heart a love full of respect for all, but especially for priests, because he saw in them a perfect image of the power and holiness of the Creator.

St. Magdalene of Pazzi loved creatures because God loved them. She rejoiced in the love He had for them, and the perfection He communicated to them. A short time before her death, she said that the great love she had for all the religious of the monastery had no other motive than the love of God.

Prayer.

My God, I love my neighbor in Thee and for Thee, because Thou willest that I love him, because he is dear to Thee, and Thou art in Him. Let all my acts of civility be so many acts of religion.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Oh, when will that day come that will see us full of sweetness and tenderness for our neighbor? When shall we see the souls of our brothers in the Sacred Heart of Jesus? Whoever sees his neighbor outside of this Heart is in danger of not loving him purely, constantly, or with duration. But who would not love him in this furnace of love? Who would not be patient with him, bear with all his imperfections? Whom will we find unworthy of our love, when we know that this divine Heart burns with love for all?—*St. Francis of Sales.*

It was this love of his neighbor for and in the Heart of Jesus that made St. Francis of Sales so sweet, so affable,

patient, and compassionate to all. The bishop of Belley one day remonstrated in a friendly way with him for showing him such honors: "Oh, what esteem has not Jesus Christ for you! I honor Him in you."

"I ought not to judge poor countrymen or women," said St. Vincent de Paul, "by their exterior—by their habits or manners. Some of them are so gross, so terrestrial, one can scarcely recognize in them the face or mind of a reasoning creature; but if we consider them by the light of faith, we shall find that they are so deeply engraven in the Heart of Jesus that He did not hesitate to shed His blood for them and to give His life for each one of them. Oh, how useful it is to see our neighbor in Jesus Christ, to do what He has done for him!"

Prayer.

O my Jesus, in Thy Sacred Heart will I regard the soul of my neighbor. There is not a single person for whom Thou hast not shed Thy blood; there is not one for whom I should hesitate to give mine.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

When Raguel saw the young Tobias, he exclaimed: "How this young man resembles my cousin!" Learning then that he was the son of his relation Tobias, he tenderly embraced him, gave him a thousand blessings, and shed tears of love over him. Why did he so love the young man? Not for his good qualities, for he had not yet learned them, but because he was the son of one who for his great virtues was deserving of love, and whom he resembled much. This is what love does when it is true. If we truly love God, we will also love all those who are embraced in the word neighbor; they are all the children of God, and resemble Him.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

The Emperor Theodosius, justly indignant, resolved to avenge himself in a striking manner for the insult offered by the people of Antioch to the Empress Flacille in overthrowing her statue. St. Macedonius, who was bishop of the city, begged one of the courtiers to say to the Empe-

ror for him : " Prince, you have just cause to punish these men who have carried insolence to such an excess, but I beg you to reflect that these guilty men are the living images of God. Fear to bring upon yourself the anger of the Lord, if you are cruel to those who are His images. You are incensed at the injury done to your spouse, who is so dear to you. Will you not inflame the anger of Jesus Christ? Will He not avenge Himself for all you do to His children, who are so dear to Him, for whom He has shed all His blood?" These words deeply impressed the Emperor.

St. Teresa said that in any affliction it sufficed for her consolation to meet some person, for she instantly saw in him the image of God Whom she loved.

A holy religious wrote this resolution: " I will love God for Himself, and for His love serve those who are His images. I consecrate my heart to God and my hands to my brethren, that both may be united in God."

Prayer.

My God, I take the same resolution: I will love God for Himself, my neighbor for God. Being the image of God, it is for God I will serve Him.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

A Christian ought in a manner to have three hearts in one: one for God, another for his neighbor, and the third for himself.—*St. Benedict Joseph Labre.*

This great servant of God, of whom it may be said that the Holy Ghost was his teacher, explains in a most admirable manner these three objects of Christian charity—God, our neighbor, and ourselves. " It is necessary that the first heart, said he, be for God: pure and sincere, that it direct all its actions towards Him, that it breathe only with love for Him and with ardor in His service, that it embrace all the crosses it pleases God to send. The second heart must be for our neighbor: generous, fearing no labor, no suf-

fering in his service; compassionate, praying for the conversion of sinners, the souls in purgatory, consoling those who are afflicted. The third heart, which is for himself, should be firm in its resolutions, abhorring all sin, mortified even to a life of sacrifices, giving its body to austerity and penance." The saint practised to the letter what he taught. Through this means he attained a perfect charity, after the example of Jesus Christ.

Prayer.

My God, let me have for Thee the heart of a child who tenderly loves his father. Give me for my neighbor the heart of the best of mothers. For myself, give me the heart of a judge who is most just.

THIRTIETH DAY.

He who truly loves himself, abhors sin; he will not suffer it to remain an instant in his heart. If he have the misfortune to become guilty in any particular, he will not defer to take the remedy established by Our Saviour, neglecting nothing to receive it with fruit. Many Christians are in hell for confessions badly made.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Benedict Joseph Labre recommended those to whom he spoke to confess often; adding also, "But you must make good confessions, because many fall into hell through confessions illy made. Among those who confess, there are three sorts: true penitents, imperfect penitents, and false penitents. Upon leaving the confessional they divide, and form three processions, which take different roads. The first are those who, before approaching the holy tribunal, have examined with care into the depths of their hearts, have discovered all the sins of which they are guilty, penetrated with sorrow, have made a sincere confession of them, and are determined to entirely satisfy here the Divine Justice, by adding to the penance imposed upon them, and by endeavoring to obtain the remission of the temporal punishment due to their sins by the application of the in-

dulgences of the Church. If these penitents are faithful, they ascend to heaven the moment they die, and are placed in possession of eternal happiness. There are very few of these true penitents. The second class is composed of imperfect penitents. They also are few in number. Nothing essential is wanting in their confession—not the examination, which was serious; nor the accusation of their sins, which was humble, sincere, and entire; nor the contrition, which was profound. But cold, and without zeal to continue to purify themselves still more by acts of contrition and love often repeated, by mortification and good works, by the application of indulgences, they die in the friendship of God, without enjoying immediately His divine presence, because they have not yet satisfied His divine justice. Their souls when separated from the body ardently sigh for heaven; but as nothing defiled can enter therein, this beautiful heaven is closed to their desires: they are condemned to purgatory, to purge away in the flames the stains which could so easily have been blotted out in this life. Finally, the third sort is composed of false penitents. This is the most numerous class. Confession was for them, through their own fault, a deadly poison. All these sacrilegious Christians reach hell by the road which should have conducted them to heaven. There they will eternally bewail that they made use for their damnation of what should have conducted them to heaven. They will cry out during all eternity, “Why did I not examine myself more seriously, why did I not accuse myself more sincerely, why did I not repent more truly, why did I not make sufficient satisfaction?” This is how that blessed soul, Benedict Joseph Labre, spoke, full of zeal to engage others to make good confessions. The manner in which he disposed himself to receive the sacrament of penance is most edifying. Convinced of the great need he had of light from the Holy Ghost, he begged that not only his memory might be made clear to know his sins, but also the true state of his soul, his habits, his inclinations. In the examination

which followed, he went over the ten commandments in their order; also the actions of the day, reflecting on the places in which he had been, the persons with whom he had conversed, the temptations he had had, and the manner in which he had corresponded to the graces he had received. He then begged anew for contrition of heart; he grieved especially for having sinned because in sinning he had offended God, the tenderest of fathers, the most perfect of beings, and Jesus Christ his Saviour, Who had shed His blood for him.

He approached with humility the minister of Christ, begging Our Lord to enlighten him that he might give him salutary advice, and that his words be accompanied by the unction of grace. Prostrate at his feet, seeing Jesus Christ in the person of His minister, he confessed his sins with simplicity, order, and lively sorrow. Every word from His confessor was for Him an oracle, and deeply penetrated his heart. At the moment of absolution this true penitent humbled himself to the dust; the sentiments of Magdalene weeping for her sins at the feet of Jesus were his. He frequently passed his confessions in review, and it is known that he made five or six general confessions. Many Christians are in hell from bad confessions.

Prayer.

My God, permit that I make use of confession as a remedy, not as an injury to my soul. Let my confessions purify, not stain me still more, lest I find my damnation where I should find my salvation.

DECEMBER.

Conformity to the Will of God.

"Not my will, but Thine be done."—ST. MATT. xxxvi. 39.

FIRST DAY.

The end of every virtue is to unite us more closely to God, on which depends all our happiness in this world. In what does this union properly consist? In the perfect conformity of our will to that of God in such a manner that our will is never in contradiction with His, that we love what He loves, and are displeased at all that displeases Him.—*St. John of the Cross.*

St. Bernard said of the Blessed Virgin that her eyes were constantly fixed on the good pleasure of God; that she conformed to it with promptness and love. Let us take her for our model. St. Teresa, in giving an account of the state of her soul to her director, said: "My will seems to me to be in such accord with that of God that all that He does is done expressly for it. All that happens seems to me to be a delicious meat that God Himself has prepared for me. I would not know how to desire anything else; this is why I find nothing bitter, nothing hard." One day one of her religious in her presence accused herself of not conforming to the will of God; St. Teresa, seeing so clearly how beautiful, how just and necessary it is to will what God wills, and to will only that, was for some moments immovable with astonishment. She could not comprehend how a creature, who is before God but a vile nothing, could do aught but love the holy and amiable will of his Creator.

Prayer.

My God, I desire nothing more ardently than to be united to Thee by a perfect conformity of my will with Thine. Let me love always what Thou lovest, and let all that displeases Thee displease me.

SECOND DAY.

We deceive ourselves greatly if we think that union with God consists in ecstasies, ravishments, and spiritual consolations. It consists alone in thinking, saying, doing that which is in conformity to the will of God. This union is perfect when our will is detached from everything, attached but to God in such a manner that it breathes but His pure will. This is the true and essential union that I ardently desire, and continually ask of Our Lord.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Teresa was in a continual state of astonishment at the great happiness of man in being able to unite himself to his Creator, and the great desire of God to see us united to Him.

St. Francis of Sales never ceased to admire in St. John the Baptist his perfect conformity to the will of God. "The holy precursor," said he, "dwelt twenty-four years in the desert, and God alone knew the great love he had for the Saviour from the time he was sanctified in his mother's womb, and the longing he had to enjoy His presence; nevertheless, he remained so devoted to his work, doing the will of God, that he quitted it but once to see Him. Having baptized Him, he did not remain among His followers, but continued to exercise the ministry confided to him. O God, what is this, if it be not to hold one's spirit detached from all, and attached to the will of God alone! This example delights me, overwhelms me with its grandeur."

Prayer.

My God, I will fix my thoughts upon Thy good pleasure alone, to unite myself to Thee with love. Nothing shall be more agreeable to me than to do Thy holy will.

THIRD DAY.

A union with God is accomplished in three ways: by conformity, uniformity, and by deiformity. Conformity is an entire subordination of our will to the divine will in all our works, and in all the incidents that happen to us, willing and accepting all that God wills, no matter how repugnant it be to nature. Uniformity is a direct alliance of our will with the divine will, by which we not only will all that God wills, but we will it solely because God wills it, rejoicing in all that God wills, because it is agreeable to Him. Deiformity is a transformation in which our will becomes one with that of God: the human will is no more felt within us, but the divine; and it desires nothing but through the Uncreated Will, being transformed into it.—*Father Cagliari*.

The sentiments of St. Magdalene of Pazzi upon this subject are most admirable. She said she would throw herself into the most frightful torments if she knew that God willed it. On the feast of Pentecost she desired most ardently to receive the Holy Ghost; she knew this God of love wished to communicate Himself to her; she sighed and longed for heaven, but she longed still more lovingly to do the will of God. She lived to accomplish more perfectly day after day these words: *Fiat voluntas tua*.

A holy soul presented himself often during the day to God, addressing Him in the following words: "Behold the servant of the Lord! Let all that Thou askest and desirest of me be done."

Prayer.

My God, I will all that Thou wilt. I rejoice to do what is agreeable to Thee. Let me have but one will with Thine.

FOURTH DAY.

Conformity to the will of God is a most powerful means of overcoming temptation, of correcting all kinds of imperfections, and of preserving peace of heart. It is an efficacious remedy for evil, and the Christian's treasure. This conformity contains in itself in a most eminent degree all other virtues.—*St. Vincent de Paul*.

St. Vincent had such affection for this virtue that it might be called his favorite and principal one. It was the motive, the principle in his soul which animated all his ex-

ercises of piety, his holiest practices, and all his actions. When he placed himself in the presence of God before his actions, it was to say with St. Paul, "Lord, what wilt Thou that I do?" If he was careful to refer all things to God, to listen to Him; if he sought with care to discern between the movements of grace and those of nature,—it was to know the will of God and to dispose himself to accomplish it. Finally, if he abhorred the maxims of the world and was closely attached to those of the Gospel; if he practised renouncement of self and embraced with affection all the crosses that the Lord sent; if he would do all, suffer all, for Christ, it was that he might always and with all possible perfection be united to the will of God and all His designs over him, and to obtain grace to will only what He willed.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may will only what Thou wilt; let me know Thy will in order that I may please Thee.

FIFTH DAY.

The angels find so much satisfaction in doing the will of God that if He asked one of them to come down upon this earth and employ himself in separating good grain from the bad, or in pulling out weeds from a field, he would instantly leave heaven and apply himself willingly and with all his heart to that which God required of him.—*Bl. Henry Suzo.*

He who spoke thus ardently desired to do the will of God. He would prefer, he said, to be the last of creatures, if it were the will of God, rather than be a seraph, and follow his own will.

St. Magdalene of Pazzi often pronounced these words: *Will of God, will of God.* She found in them inexpressible satisfaction. Frequently she would exclaim, "How beautiful is the will of God, how amiable!"

Prayer.

My God, I believe there is nothing better than to fulfil with joy, with love, Thy will. What wilt Thou that I do? I am ready.

SIXTH DAY.

A soul that is truly submissive to the will of God is not attached to anything created: it knows that all that is not God is vanity and nothingness; accordingly it has no other object, no other end, but to die to self, to be resigned always and in all things.—*Bl. Henry Suzo.*

St. Vincent de Paul excelled in this particular point: he lived detached from all creatures and from himself. His continual desire was to conform himself to the good pleasure of God, and to adore with love the dispositions of His providence.

St. Teresa wrote to her director: “The actual state of my soul is, that I will only what God wills. The will of God and His good pleasure are so closely united to my desires and my inclinations that I have no other; it even seems that I could have no other. It is that alone I desire solely and perfectly. This disposition is profoundly engraven in my heart. I have no need to multiply acts of submission to the will of God; I love all that He wills, and sovereignly rejoice in it.”

Prayer.

My God, I adore Thy will, I submit myself to it, I love it, I rejoice to accomplish it, I desire only that.

SEVENTH DAY.

As God knows what is good and useful for us, He gives to each of us what will tend most to His glory, to our own salvation, and the good of our neighbor. We deceive ourselves, then, and consult our own interest but little, if we do not abandon ourselves entirely to His good pleasure.—*St. Teresa.*

The wife of St. Francis Borgia, who was very dear to him, being dangerously ill, Our Saviour gave the saint the choice of her life or death. He replied, “Lord, why leave to me a choice which is in Thy power alone? That which I desire most is to do in all things Thy will; Thou alone knowest what is best for me. Do, then, as pleases Thee best, not only with my wife, but with my children and myself. *Fiat voluntas tua.*”

Prayer.

My God, do what is most for Thy glory and most advantageous for me. I desire only what Thou wilt.

EIGHTH DAY.

We ought to subject ourselves to the will of God, and be content no matter in what state it pleases Him to place us. We should never desire to leave it, so long as we know that God does not will it.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

Father Dupont said to one of his friends that he rejoiced in his natural defects, particularly in an impediment he had in his speech. He added that he also rejoiced in the temptations and other miseries that tried him, because it was God's will that he had them. "If it were the will of God that I lived a thousand years loaded with all kind of infirmities, and in the greatest darkness, I would be content, provided that I did not offend God."

St. Elizabeth, learning that her husband was killed in battle, addressed herself to God, and said, "O my God! Thou knowest that I would prefer to see him to all the delights of the world, but since it has pleased Thee to take him from me, I submit with all my heart to Thy holy will. If by giving one hair of my head I could bring him back to life, I would not do it if it were opposed to Thy good pleasure."

Prayer.

My God, I will rejoice in whatever happens. All that pleases Thee pleases me, because it is Thy will.

NINTH DAY.

You have not attained that purity which you should have, so long as you are not constantly, entirely, and joyously submissive to the will of God in all things, even in those the most repugnant.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

The congregation of St. Vincent de Paul having met with a loss of some consideration, the saint wrote as fol-

lows to one of his friends: "Being one of our most intimate friends, I must acquaint you with a loss with which we have recently met: it is not an evil that has befallen us, but a favor which we have received from God, and for which you will help us to return thanks to Him. I call the afflictions which He sends us favors and benefits, particularly when they are well received. It is in His infinite goodness that He has ordered this loss, and He gives us grace to accept it with perfect and entire resignation—I may say with the same joy we would have felt had He sent some great prosperity."

Prayer.

My God, I love adversity as well as prosperity, because it is Thou Who sendest it. I thank Thee for all.

TENTH DAY.

One act of resignation to the divine will in that which is contrary to our inclination is of more value than ten thousand words of thanks for that which conforms to our taste.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

The blessed John of Avila gave vent to his sentiments as follows, writing to one who was in affliction. He desired him to bless God as Jacob did, and to encourage him he said: "*One God be praised* in the time of adversity is worth more than a thousand *I thank you* in prosperity."

St. Francis of Sales said to persons in affliction: "First. Adore a thousand times the decrees of Divine Providence. Throw yourself unceasingly into the arms of God and into His heart. Say often, *Amen, so be it.* Second. Often unite your cross to the cross of Jesus Christ, reflecting that yours compared to His is light and small. Third. Prostrate yourself before God with simplicity, saying, 'Yes, Lord, if Thou willest it, I will it, and if Thou dost not will it, I do not.' Fourth. Make many acts of love to the Blessed Virgin and the saints in whom you have most confidence, making use of many aspirations of love. Fifth. Imagine that the Infant Jesus is with you, consoling you with His love. Sixth. Take your crucifix in your hand, look with love upon the

image of Our Saviour attached to the cross, kiss with respect this image, press it to your heart, and beg of the God of consolation to comfort you."

Prayer.

My God, I am, with the help of Thy grace, resigned to all,—to light as well as darkness, consolations or pain, prosperity or adversity, life or death.

ELEVENTH DAY.

Perfect resignation is nothing more than the moral annihilation of our thoughts and affections. We acquire this in abandoning ourselves entirely to God, to be guided according to His good pleasure.—*Bl. Henry Suzo.*

St. Catharine of Genoa had reached this holy annihilation. She had neither desire nor affection for the things of earth, wishing only that God would do in her and with her as He willed, resolved to offer no resistance. She one day remarked: "Whether I eat or drink, whether I speak or remain silent, whether I sleep or wake, walk or rest, I belong to God, I am ready to obey Him."

Prayer.

My God, direct me according to Thy good pleasure. Do with me as Thou wilt—Thou art the Master. I will always say, "All is well," whatever Thou dost.

TWELFTH DAY.

When will the time come when we shall taste the sweetness of the divine will in all that happens to us, considering only the good pleasure of God? It is certain that this good pleasure comes to us in adversity as well as in prosperity; it makes a part of one as much as of the other, because God loves us, and because it is for our advantage.—*St. Jane Frances.*

One of the companions of St. Vincent de Paul being dangerously ill, St. Vincent wrote to a friend regarding the loss the congregation was about to meet. "It appears that Our Lord wishes to take His share of our little society. It

is all His: therefore He has the best right to do as He pleases with it. As for me, my greatest desire is to desire nothing but the accomplishment of His divine will." In the many infirmities with which the saint was visited, particularly during the last year of his life, when he felt his end approaching, he was always the same, perfectly indifferent to consolations, sufferings, or death. He desired above all that the will of God be accomplished in him.

St. John Chrysostom repeated these words so frequently that they might be regarded as his motto: "Lord, glory belongs to Thee for all,"—*Gloria tibi, Domine, propter omnia.*

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may taste in all that happens the sweetness of Thy divine will. Thy will, Thy will, I desire only the accomplishment of Thy will! How sweet is Thy will!

THIRTEENTH DAY.

To abandon ourselves to God is to give Him our own will. When a soul can with truth say, "Lord, I have no other will than Thine," it no longer belongs to itself—it is united to God.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

Father Dupont, having promised God to do His will at all times and in every contradiction, often manifested his desire to be faithful to his promise by addressing Him in these words: "Lord, let Thy holy will be done in me, by me, over me, in all that concerns me, in the manner that pleases Thee, at every moment and during eternity."

Prayer.

My God, I abandon myself to Thee, I give Thee my will. Let Thy will be done in me, by me, over me, in all things and forever.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

There are many who say to God, "I give myself to Thee, without any reserve," but there are few who practise this abandonment. It consists in receiving from the hands of God with a certain indifference all things according to the order of His providence.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Vincent de Paul showed by the sweetness of his words and the serenity of his countenance that he looked upon all the events of life with equal indifference. He never lost sight of his great maxim, "Nothing happens in the world but by the order of Divine Providence." Into the arms of Providence he threw himself and abandoned himself entirely. A worthy prelate, who was struck with admiration at his unalterable sweetness, which nothing could disturb, said, "Father Vincent is always Father Vincent."

The saint, learning that a suit was about to be commenced to deprive several houses of his congregation of some land, replied to those who spoke of it: "Whatever is pleasing to God will take place; He is Master of all we possess; may He dispose of it as He wills."

Prayer.

Lord, dispose of my goods, of my family, of my friends, of myself as Thou wilt, I will bless Thee; all is well that Thou dost.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

If you give yourself to the exercise of holy abandonment you will make much progress. It will be with you as with those out at sea with a favorable wind, abandoning themselves to the guidance of a good pilot.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

The prayer of St. Gertrude to God must have been agreeable to Him. She said with greatest fervor: "Lord, I beg Thee have no regard for my will, but only for Thine. Do with me what Thou knowest will tend most to Thy glory and to my good. I have no other desire but to be and to do what Thou wilt. No, my most amiable Saviour, let it not be my will that I do any will but Thine. *Non mea, sed tua voluntas fiat, Jesu amantissime.*"

Prayer.

My God, I will only what Thou wilt, I wish to be what Thou wilt, and as Thou wilt.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

One of the effects of holy abandonment to God is tranquillity of mind in the different accidents of life. The means to preserve this is to imitate the pilots who constantly look towards the pole, that is, the will of God, in order to be closely attached to it.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

“I have never had a bad day,” said a holy person who was very poor. “Nothing evil has ever happened to me; I fear neither hunger nor thirst, cold nor heat, infirmities nor contempt, because I receive all from the hand of God with joy. It is delicious to me to conform to His will. I unite myself to the humanity of Jesus Christ by humility, to His divinity by love: where then can I find evil, since I am united to my amiable Saviour, Who has suffered for me? I am a true king, my kingdom is in my soul, because with the help of God’s grace I am master of my senses, interior as well as exterior, and my passions I treat as slaves. Through recollection, meditation, and union with God I have learned to govern myself. I have experienced that I can never find rest away from God; since I have abandoned myself entirely to Him I continually enjoy peace ineffable; I have abandoned myself to Him by renouncing all affection for earthly things.”

Prayer.

My God, I abandon myself entirely to Thee. Make me the master of myself, interior and exterior, and of all my passions. O my Jesus, grant that I may be united to Thy humanity by humility, to Thy divinity by love.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

It is this holy abandonment which produces that beautiful liberty of spirit perfect souls enjoy. They find in this liberty all the felicity they can desire on earth, because desiring nothing, fearing nothing, they possess all.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Francis of Sales seemed to be always as contented as if everything was according to his desires. During a persecution which was waged against him and his society he wrote to Mother Chantal: "I submit these great storms which have arisen to Divine Providence. Let them continue or cease as it pleases Him. The tempest or the calm is equally dear to me. If the world did not oppose our designs, we would not be the servants of God."

The Emperor Ferdinand II. addressed each day this prayer to God: "Lord, if Thy glory and my salvation require that I become greater or more powerful than I am, elevate me; I will glorify Thee. If it be for Thy honor and my salvation that I remain as I am, preserve me and I will glorify Thee; but if humiliations contribute to Thy praise and my good, humble me, abase me, and I will glorify Thee."

When this thought: "What will happen to-day? what will become of you to-day?" came to the mind of Father Alvarez, he would reply: "What God wills;" then addressing himself to God he would say: "I wish only to satisfy Thee."

Prayer.

My God, elevate me, humble me, according to Thy will. I will glorify Thee always; I desire only to please Thee, to satisfy Thee.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

How beautiful it is to see one divested of all attachments, ready to practise every virtue, to be charitable, sweet with every one, equally calm in consolations or in tribulations, always satisfied if the will of God be done.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This saint paints himself in the above portrait without being conscious of it. Not even a thread held him to any

created thing; had it been the case, he would have cut it instantly. Knowing that time was given him only to do acts of virtue, he seized every occasion to put them in practice, particularly charity, which was his favorite virtue. Although of a lively disposition, he was never heard to say a harsh word; all his conversation was seasoned with much sweetness, ever careful to watch over himself, that he might not fail in that virtue of mildness, so rare among those who have the charge of many affairs. He would say that it mattered little to him whether he performed one duty or another, provided he did the will of God. It was his equanimity of temper, his unalterable sweetness, his great charity for his neighbor, his continual union with God, to Whom he always submitted himself, Whom he loved so tenderly, and Whom he desired so ardently to see loved, that made him so dear to God and to man.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may not be attached to anything created. I renounce all disorderly affections. Grant that, being detached from all, I may always do with joy what Thou wilt.

NINETEENTH DAY.

When shall we abandon ourselves entirely to the good pleasure of God, submitting our will and all our affections without any reserve to His dominion? Then only shall our souls be so united to God that we can say with the first Christians, who were so perfect: "It is not I who live: it is Jesus Christ Who lives in me."—*St. Francis of Sales.*

This great saint, many years before his death, willed nothing, saw nothing, loved nothing but God in all things. "No, no," said he, "nothing in the world can satisfy me; God alone can suffice for me." He was often heard to exclaim, all absorbed in God: "Lord, what is there in heaven, what can I desire on earth, if not Thee? Thou art my portion, my inheritance for eternity." His great maxim was: "All that is not God is nothing to me."

Prayer.

My God, Thou alone canst satisfy me; I will love but Thee in all things.

TWENTIETH DAY.

If any one wishes to unite himself to God, he must examine and see whether there be anything between his soul and God which might prevent this union; whether he does not seek himself in some actions, whether God is truly the God of his heart.—*Bl. Henry Suso.*

St. John Berchmans having seriously examined his heart found no disorderly affection there. After his death a book was found which seems to have been the depository of the sentiments of his soul. He had written therein: *Nulli rei sum affectus, et nihil habeo cui afficiar*—"I am attached to nothing created, there is nothing to which I feel attached."

St. Vincent de Paul having converted a gentleman of great distinction, who had lived many years at court and had been governed by the maxims of the world, advised him to make frequent examinations of the desires of his heart. He followed this advice, being convinced by his zealous director that the less he was attached to creatures the more he would be united to God. He examined therefore successively whether his attachment to his relations, friends, and family was for God alone, and whether he was truly detached from the goods of this world, from its honors, possessions, and glories. By this means he got on the road to perfection. He told St. Vincent one day that he had sacrificed to God the only thing he felt he had any attachment for, and instantly he was rewarded for this generosity, which had cost him no little pain, by so great a liberty of heart that he no longer had an affection for anything perishable.

Prayer.

My God, if there is in my heart anything which prevents the union which should be between my soul and Thee, I beg Thee to destroy it. Thou alone wilt suffice.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

When no cloud hides the sun it will necessarily enter a room that is exposed to its rays, provided the windows are open. In like manner God hesitates not to communicate Himself to a soul which He sees divested of all human affection—to a soul which has in its heart only what He wishes.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

A young man came to St. Bernard, threw himself at his feet, and begged him to receive him among his religious, notwithstanding his extreme youth. "You will be well satisfied with me," said he. The saint, touched by the simplicity and good-will of the youth, raised him up, saying: "My son, bring to Our Lord a heart devoid of everything, that He may fill it,"—*Affer Deo cor vacuum, ut illud Deus impleat.*

Prayer.

My God, I will often examine the desires of my heart that I may renounce all affection for terrestrial things.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

A soul that is attached to anything that is not for God will never possess the liberty of divine union. It matters little whether a bird be held by a rope or a thread. So long as it cannot break its chains, it matters little how light they be; it will not be able to fly. Ah! how many souls there are which we might compare to rich vessels because they are freighted with many good works, many spiritual exercises, and other virtues, yet never arrive at the haven of a perfect union with God, because they have not the courage to break some light chain.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

"Death or the love of God," exclaimed St. Teresa; "heaven or the love which animates the saints in heaven. Alas! so long as I remain in this mortal life I will incline towards the earth, I will only love my God imperfectly. Ought I desire anything but God? Life is a death from which death delivers us. Let me die, let me die, that I may love God alone, that I may love Him perfectly. I die of regret because I cannot die." This saint rejoiced each time the clock struck. "Thank God," she said, "I have an hour less to remain in this place of exile. I ap-

proach my true country, that place of pure and perfect rest."

Prayer.

My God, Thou art the God of my heart. I desire but Thee. I sigh after heaven, because it is only in heaven that we shall love Thee perfectly.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

This is the reason why, notwithstanding the many Communions we receive, we are not sanctified—because we do not let Our Saviour reign in us as He desires. He comes to us, He finds our hearts full of desires, of affections, of little vanities. This is not what He wishes. He desires to find them entirely empty, that He can make Himself absolute master of them, absolute ruler.—*St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Louis Gonzaga made every action of the week either a thanksgiving to God for the Communion he had received the preceding Sunday or a preparation for the Communion of the following Sunday.

The venerable Palafox, while yet living in the world, in each Communion that he made proposed to himself the eradication of one of his faults, or the acquiring of some virtue. By this means he overcame what was vicious in his soul and advanced steadily in piety.

Blessed Agatha of the Cross prepared herself for sacramental Communion by making spiritual Communions many times during the day.

St. Teresa prepared herself for Communion by offering herself at least fifty times during the day to Our Lord, begging Him to dispose of her as pleased Him best.

Prayer.

My God, I beg of Thee to empty my heart of all vanity, of all affection for things perishable, so that Thou mayest become absolute master thereof, and do with me as Thou wilt.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

The most efficacious and shortest means to acquire this universal detachment to which Our Saviour invites us, and without which we cannot have perfect union, is great mortification of the senses and of the passions.—*St. John of the Cross.*

This saint mortified his senses by refusing them what might delight them, in order to prove his love for Jesus suffering. He mortified his desires by choosing that which was most painful, most disagreeable, and most difficult. Desirous for mortification, either interior or exterior, nothing could satisfy him. "O Jesus, crucified for me, let me suffer and be despised for Thee." Such was his motto. How intimate must have been his union with God!

St. Francis Borgia often begged Our Saviour to render everything in life disagreeable to him, and by his mortification it became so to him. By this means he became a man of prayer, who found all things delicious and agreeable that Our Lord asked of him.

Prayer.

My God, give me the grace necessary to mortify my senses and my passions unceasingly, that I may acquire detachment from all things.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

If you would desire that union with God which seeks to please Him alone in all things, do not lose sight of recollection in your manner of life and in conversation. Live as much as possible within your interior; think of God, Who dwells there; hasten to banish from your heart all that you have heard or seen from without. Your heart will be dilated, you will run in the way of His commandments, you will make it your delight to accomplish His will.—*Bl. Henry Suzo.*

Father Alvarez appeared at one time to have his thoughts so deeply concentrated in himself that some one asked him if anything was the matter. "I am studying to live as if I were in a desert in Africa; I would wish to be as detached from every creature as if I really dwelt there," was his reply.

St. Thomas Aquinas could think only of God, could speak only of Him, and loved to hear Him spoken of. When in conversation other things were spoken of, he took no part in it. It could be remarked that he occupied himself interiorly with God. All that he asked was to possess Him Whom alone He sought to please.

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may dwell within myself, that I may always live in Thy presence.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

Always endeavor to live in the presence of God by an entire abandonment of yourself to His divine will; and whenever you find your mind inclined to wander from this peaceful state, hasten to recall it, though in a quiet manner.—*Bl. Henry Suso.*

St. Jane Frances was naturally of a lively disposition. In order to repress her natural vivacity she wrote some acts of love, faith, hope, offerings, requests, etc., etc., and placed the paper upon which they were written on her breast over her heart. She made a compact with God that every time she placed her hand over the paper, either night or day, it expressed her intention to perform all the acts contained therein.

Prayer.

My God, I desire to think always of Thee, and to say that I love Thee. Every time I breathe, let it be an aspiration which says, I love Thee.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

God requires works, hence we must suspend our exercises of piety whenever obedience or charity for our neighbor demands it. The work that God then asks of us will conduct more speedily to Him than the highest contemplation.—*St. Teresa.*

St. Clare of Montefalco practised with the greatest delight whatever was most austere and painful in the monastery. She said that the gift of prayer is perfected in this manner.

While St. Magdalene of Pazzi was a novice, her mistress, knowing her great love for prayer, permitted her to retire to pray at different times while the others were employed in some manual labor. But she did not make use of the privilege. "In performing the same exercises as the others through obedience," she said, "I am sure to do the will of God; in doing anything else, I am rather following my own will, no matter how holy the exercise may be."

Prayer.

My God, never permit me to do my own will. It is Thy will I would always accomplish, and with love. I am here but for this.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Our own will is what spoils and corrupts all our devotions, all our works, all our penances.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This saint undertook nothing without having first consulted God, so that he might act by the movement of His holy will alone.

M. Denysiot, pastor of Saint-Fargeau, accepted his parish only out of obedience, and when his health was impaired, resigned it on the advice of his confessor. Having recovered his health, the parish of Saint-Quentin was offered to him, and he accepted it, at the direction of his bishop and his confessor. In the meantime the almoner of the hospital died, and the worthy priest performed the duties of the almoner. When the office was tendered to him, he replied that it depended solely on the bishop; that he would not make any objection. "The bishop has but to make known his wish," he said, "and I will immediately leave my parish and retire to the hospital." To these dispositions so admirable and so rare may be attributed the great good he did.

Prayer.

My God, may I act only through the movements of Thy divine will, that Thy will, not mine, be done! Often will I say, "Lord, what wilt Thou that I do?"

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

All the saints have sighed for death to see God in heaven, where His will is done always.—*St. Alphonsus Liguori.*

“Let me die, Lord, that I may see Thee,” said St. Augustin,—*Moriar, ut te videam.*

A gentleman hunting in a forest was surprised by a voice singing sweetly; he sought about to discover who it was that sung; he found a man apparently at the point of death, his body covered with wounds. “Is it you who are singing?” he asked. “How can you sing in the terrible condition in which I see you?” “Yes, it is I who sing,” was the answer; “I am content to suffer, since it is God Who wills that I should suffer. I rejoice that my life is going like a flame that is expiring; I will soon enjoy the happiness of seeing God.”

Prayer.

My God, grant that I may rejoice that my house of clay commences to dissolve. Soon will I be out of a state where I can offend Thee, and shall enjoy the happiness of seeing Thee in eternity.

THIRTIETH DAY.

It is necessary that we should be always in such dispositions as to be willing to die at the time and in the manner that God wills.—*St. Alphonsus Liguori.*

One day St. Gertrude in ascending a hill, fell. Meeting nothing to arrest the fall, she soon reached the bottom of the hill. Providence miraculously preserved her life, and she was not even injured. Her companions asked her whether she was not afraid she might have died without the Last Sacraments. “No,” replied she. “I desire certainly to receive the Last Sacraments before death, but I desire more ardently that the will of God be accomplished. This is the best disposition in which to be found at the hour of death.”

Prayer.

My God, I accept death because it is Thy will that I die. I desire to die the death that Thou wilt I should die. Let me die in Thy love. I thank Thee because Thou hast willed I should thus die.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

In order that we may always do the will of God and acquire perfection we must never lose sight of Jesus Christ, Who was given us for a model. In proportion as we copy Him we will be happy. Jesus Christ is the book and the mirror that we must study unceasingly. In them we will learn what to avoid and what we ought to practise.—*St. Vincent de Paul.*

This was the ordinary, the continual practice of this saint. There was no circumstance in the life of Our Saviour, not one of His maxims, that was not known to him, that was not always present to his mind. The actions of Jesus Christ were the rule of his life. He consulted Him before all his undertakings and all the decisions which he gave. Before speaking or acting he would say: "What would Jesus Christ say, what would He do, if placed in the same position in which I am?"

Prayer.

O my divine Saviour, Thou art my book, my mirror. I will consult Thee always to learn what I must do. I desire that Thy actions be the rule of my actions. Grant me this grace, which I ask through the intercession of Mary, our Mother, the angels, and the saints. Amen.

If all men abandon you, God will not abandon you.

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